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THIS MONTH'S COVER

On the 9th of May 1966, India celebrates the birth Centenary of Gopal Krishna Gokhale who, by his total dedication to the cause of India's freedom and progress, set an example to public workers of his time and for all times. The high moral tone he imparted to political work, the emphasis he laid on the purity of means and the fairness, consideration and courtesy he showed his opponents—these and many other virtues invested his life with an exclusive majesty. May the people of India who offer their homage to this illustrious patriot on the 9th of May follow his example and purify and enrich public life in the country.

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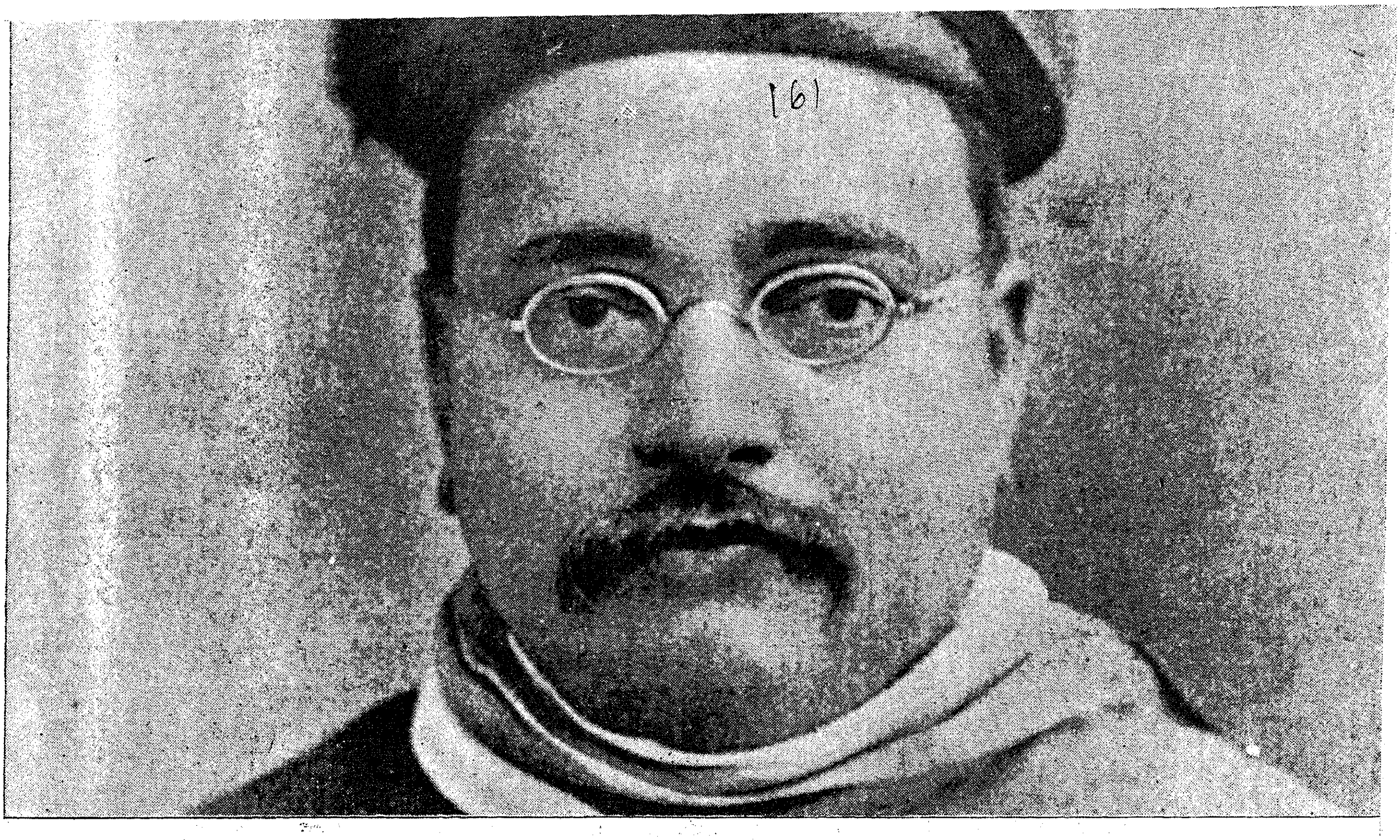
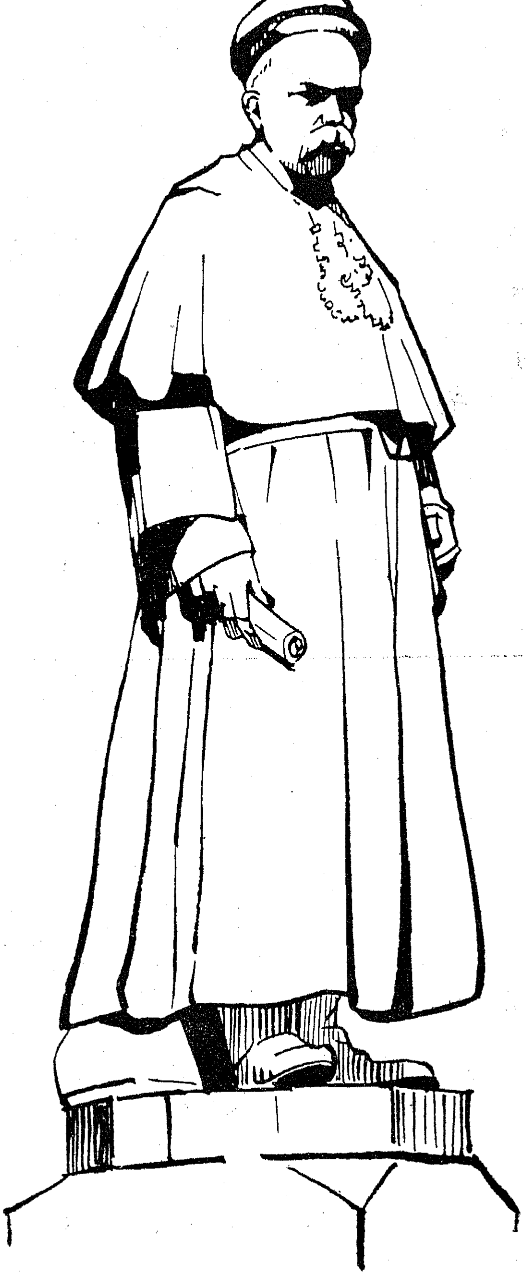


Homage

Heroic Heart, Lost hope of all our days!
Need's thou the homage of our love or praise?
Lo! Let the mournful millions round thy pyre
Kindle their souls with consecrated fire,
Caught from the brave torch fallen from thy hand,
To succour and to serve our stricken land,
And in a daily worship taught by thee,
Upbuild the temple of her unity.

—SAROJINI NAIL



A RICH MOMENT IN GOKHALE'S LIFE

After the Amraoti Congress of 1897 when we were returning, he (Justice Ranade) and I (Gokhale) were, for one night, the only occupants of our carriage. At about 4 a.m. I was suddenly roused by some singing in the carriage and on opening my eyes I saw Ranade sitting up and singing two **abhangas** of Tukaram again and again and striking his palms together by way of accompaniment. The voice was by no means musical, but the fervour with which he was singing was so great that I felt thrilled through and through and I too could not help sitting up and listening. The **abhangas** mean: "He who befriends the afflicted and the persecuted—he is a true saint and God Himself is to be found there. Be you humble and seek the favour of saints. If you want to realize God, this is an easy way."

As I sat listening to those verses, I could not help realizing how constant was Ranade's endeavour to live up to this teaching and how simple and how glorious was the rule of life that it inculcated? It was a rich moment in my own life. The scene indeed will never fade from my memory.

GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

Sri S. R. Venkataraman,
Servants of India Society, Madras.

" With a liberated manhood, with buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly by all with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated and lastly with a love that overleaps all bounds—renovated India will take proper rank among the nations of the World and be the master of the situation and of her own Destiny. This is the goal to be reached—this is the Promised Land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier they who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon the holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression and sorrow will then be myths of the past and the Gods will again descend to the earth and associate with men as they did in times which we now call mythical"—*M.G. Ranade.*

Clearing the way

The late Sri Gokhale, the foremost disciple of Ranade at whose feet he sat and learnt for fourteen years was an exemplar of the sentiments contained in Ranade's statement quoted above. In the concluding remarks of his speech on the Elementary Education Bill in the Legislative Council in 1912, Gokhale included himself in the second category of workers whose only role was to clear the way leading on to the promised land of Local Self-Government. Surveying now the magnitude of Gokhale's services to the country one marvels when one realises that Sri Gokhale could accomplish so much in so short a time. He was only 48 years when he died.

He was born in 1866 in the small village of Kotluk in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra in a poor family. He had his early education at Kholapur and higher education in Poona and Bombay. He took the B.A degree at the young age of 18. The same year he joined as a Member of the Deccan Education Society, which had been started a few years earlier and had laid the foundations for the great edifice which has now grown into the well known Fergusson College in Poona. Gokhale taught in that institution English, Mathematics, History and Political Economy by turns. His eighteen years of service in the Fergusson College was a period of incessant activity. The study of bluebooks, the mastering of statistics, the editing of the English columns of the Sudharak, the Secretaryship of the Sarvajanik Sabha and editing of its quarterly, all these had their share in his daily work, not to speak of his week-end visits to places outside Poona soliciting funds for building up the Fergusson College.

After eighteen years of intensive activity, it was inevitable that he should retire from the College which synchronised with the resignation of Sri P. M. Mehta of his seat in the Supreme Legislative Council in 1902, and the choice of a successor fell on the coming man, Sri Gokhale.

In the political arena

As is well known, Sri Gokhale was in every way qualified to dominate the Council. Denied of the rights which the Members enjoyed after the Minto-Morley Reform Scheme, Gokhale soon made himself felt. His maiden speech on the budget proved that the new member was determined to maintain the "new spirit" of fearless independence which Sir P. M. Mehta had introduced in the Council debates. Gokhale had many an arduous fights to wage in the Council. Almost single handed, he stoutly contested many of the "efficiency"

measures, introduced by Lord Curzon and Gokhale's masterly speeches delivered in those unholy contests are well worth a study even now. The official members dreaded Gokhale's eloquence more than that of any other. He asked few questions and moved fewer resolutions. When Gokhale asked questions the Government was convinced that their only reply could be to accept the correctness of his position and promise to implement his suggestions. If we examine any of his so-called superficial failures we find that ultimately most of his suggestions were accepted sooner than later by the Government.

The Education Bill

Gokhale's most outstanding service to the country was the introduction and partial success of his Elementary Education Bill. Soon after its first reading Gokhale started on an eventful tour throughout the country. And Gokhale's lucid expositions of the provisions of the Bill were not a little responsible for the overwhelming support that the public extended to the Bill. However the Bill was technically thrown out, because the Government was not convinced about the need for introducing compulsion in certain select areas as Gokhale desired. The Government of India however announced a recurring grant of half a crore, for implementing Gokhale's demand for providing elementary education to the children of the soil. Thus the defeat of the bill was in a sense really a momentous success for Gokhale.

The next activity that engrossed Gokhale's attention was his Membership of the Public Services Commission. By his masterly cross-examinations of some of the European witnesses who criticised the fitness of the Indians to hold high administrative places in Government, he exposed the absurdity of their prejudiced contention. Not a few of his European traducers cursed themselves for having taken an unfriendly attitude towards Indians and for having cast unjustly a slur on the character and capacity of Indians.

As a Congressman his activities were no less momentous to the country. He has been its ardent and consistent supporter and was long its Secretary along with Sri D. E. Wacha. Twice he went as the accredited delegate of the Congress to England and had the privilege of discussing the Indian situation with distinguished English statesmen and the Secretaries of State for India. When he presided over the Congress Session at Banares in 1905, he was the youngest of those who had ascended the Presidential Gadi till then. His speech is a devastating attack on the strong rule of Lord Curzon the Viceroy of India. His share in formulating the Minto-Morley Reform Scheme of 1909 has been publicly alluded to by Lord Morley himself the then Secretary of State for India and the co-author of the Reforms of 1909. Though called a Moderate, Gokhale was one of our most advanced statesmen, but that did not take him away from the Congress. When the Congress faced the din and fury of the political storms in the country he was one of the anchors that held it fast to its moorings. The storm culminated in the Surat "wreck". His activities thereafter were all bent on stabilising the Congress and save it from all internal squabbles and fissiparous tendencies.

GOKHALE'S VIRTUE

Gokhale had many virtues in him. The chief amongst them was his complete dedication at a very young age to the service of the country with selfless devotion.

—TILAK

Gokhale the man

Gokhale's success on the political scene was due to his courageous independence and ceaseless striving. When he had to state an unpalatable truth, the fear of official displeasure did not hold him back. He told the imperial Lord Curzon to his very face that despite the boasted impartiality of British justice, he could not dare to march hand-cuffed to the Thana, the Editor of any Anglo-Indian journal who might have deliberately violated any of the repressive measures such as the Official Secrets Act. Even when a sympathetic statesman like Lord Hardinge was the Viceroy of India it did not deter Gokhale from saying that the people of India had no confidence in the pious resolution of the Government of India, unless they were prepared to specify the time by which they would establish the promised ninety-one thousand primary schools.

Even more marvellous was his persistence; but for it the poor peasant could not have bought his daily quota of salt at a cheaper price, and the Government of India would not have committed themselves to their then forward policy in education. The failure of any action and opposition from Government never deterred Gokhale from reverting to his theme again and again, until the Government finding their stock arguments torn to pieces one by one by his frequent sortie ultimately conceded his demands.

Gokhale studied every subject from every point of view and mastered the facts of the subject. He was a master of figures. His speeches on finance, delivered at meetings of the Imperial Legislative Council and the evidence he gave before the Welby Commission all show what a pastmaster he was in that difficult art of handling financial questions. More than one Finance Minister of the Government of India had stated that to Gokhale the Government of India owed many a light which served to enable the Government to solve financial difficulties.

Gokhale's life is singularly unique. He has left footprints by following which "we can make our lives sublime". In those of us who are not favoured by fortune, his record engenders strong hopes. Though of poor parentage Gokhale joined the Deccan Education Society of Poona as a member and had to content himself with Rs. 75 per month while in active service, and a pension of Rs. 30 on retirement. His popularity was the measure of a fearless and straightforward life. Though for a time one might be a gainer, there is no lasting honour for the leader, who, afraid of the consequences which a bold course of action might compel him to face prefers, the line of least resistence. His robust optimism, an inheritance from his Guru Ranade was another great attribute of Gokhale. In November, 1911, he stated that it could not be the intention of God to keep one-fifth of the total population of the world in its present depressed state. The depth of this optimism can be realised when one remembers that he put forth all his effort with the full knowledge that it will be quite infructuous in most cases. It is this philosophy of work that made him remark: "It will no doubt be given to our countrymen of future generations to serve India by their successes; we of the present generation must be content to serve her mainly by our failures. For hard though it be, out of these failures strength will come which in the end will accomplish tasks".

Firm as a rock

Judged by modern standards, Gokhale was a man when he passed away, having yet to complete his fiftieth year. But he had concentrated in that short period of three decades of active work what many others equally gifted like him could not have achieved in five decades. All classes, creeds and castes had undoubted confidence in his patriotism and statesmanship, as he was an embodiment of all the best that India stands for and could produce. British statesmen and Indian administrators alike had the greatest esteem and respect for his sound judgment and selflessness; and the varied talents with which he was richly endowed gave him an ascendency in the Councils of Government, rare to find in the annals of our country. The position of a responsible leader of public opinion in India is most difficult. But Gokhale notwithstanding the official and non-official opposition and criticism consistently stood firm as a rock on those principles which alone according to his firm conviction could advance the progress of the country. The advancement of the motherland was his unquestioning passion and the amelioration of the condition, his sole concern. The thought of the self never once disturbed his pure mind and he repelled the attacks of his hostile critics both officials and fellow countrymen in the conviction, that he was in the right. His love of country and intimate knowledge of the problems equipped him for the duties of a responsible leader of India. Self-sacrifice, patriotism, practical wisdom and unceasing work, these were the dominant features of his career. He often appealed to the young generation to take a vow of service and devote their lives to the service of the motherland. His influence on the developmental policy of Government was not inconsiderable, and though it was not possible for an Indian in those days, however great and exalted he may be, to achieve success in this direction, his voice was seldom raised in vain. All his energies and time, he had dedicated to the cause of his country' in the service' in which he literally wore himself out. His faith, his principles and his methods of work are all well-known and if they are taken as our guides we shall be doing a duty to ourselves and to him.

We can, each one of us, do our utmost to follow the example he has set to us. Let us work in the spirit in which he worked and, he will not have lived and worked in vain.

The Gokhale Tradition

नरपतिहितकर्ता द्वेष्यतां याति लके।
जनपदहितकर्ता त्यज्यते पार्थिवेन ।।

इति महति विरोधे विद्यमाने समाने
नृपति जनपदानां दुर्लभ: कर्यकर्ता

"One who takes care of the interests of the rulers is disliked by the people. One who looks after the interests of the people is discarded by the rulers. In such a contradictory situation, one who serves the interests of both is rare to come across"—*Pancha Tantra.*

The two couplets from the *Pancha Tantra* given above epitomise the role played by Gopal Krishna Gokhale during the three crucial decades that preceded the outbreak of the First World War. A man of peace who lived and worked during a period when India was seething with unrest, an ardent admirer of the British way of life who had to contend against the new-born nationalism which was veering to the extreme of disliking everything British, a great parliamentarian who built up parliamentary traditions even as the chill British beauracratic winds were stifling the tender shoots of democracy, a clear-headed realist who believed that ordered progress was possible only under the British rule when current opinion was militantly in favour of achieving swaraj to effect progress, Gokhale fought simultaneously on two fronts. On the one side, he stormed the imperial set-up with the demand of the people backed with strong but responsible criticism of the British regime. On the other side, he struggled hard to redeem the people from restrictions that impeded their progress and to promote all movements that helped to weld them into a united nation. He, thus, sought to achieve the seemingly impossible. The success that attended on his work went to enhance national pride and self-respect. The failures he faced only steeled the nation to work harder. "It will no doubt be given to our countrymen of future generations", he said, "to serve India by their successes we of the present generation must be content to serve her by our failures."

Entering Politics

Gokhale consecrated himself for national service at the tender age of eighteen. He signed a contract with the Deccan Education Society to serve its institution for twenty years on a monthly allowance of Rs. 75. This, despite his having come from a very poor family. He addressed himself to his work with all the required concentration and energy to draw the best out of every student so that he could help in building the country. When, at the end of twenty years, he retired from Fergusson College to take part in politics, his material position continued to be precarious. At that time he said, "I have built up for myself, a small income of about Rs. 125 a month which with my monthly pension of Rs. 30 from the College, is enough, to keep me in comfort. What I want now is a chance to make myself useful to my country".

And Gokhale did not enter politics without adequate preparation for the strenuous life of a public worker. While engaged in teaching, he seized every opportunity to enlarge the range and depth of his mind. His association with the Sarvajanik Sabha, the then premier political organisation of Poona which specialised in studying political questions in all their bearing and sending constructive, documented memorials to the Government, provided him opportunities not only to come in close contact with some of the master minds of his time but also to study political, social and economic

SERVICE FOR INDIA

He (Gokhale) spoke of the unequalled happiness and privilege of service for India. "Stand here with me" he said, "with the stars and hills for witness and in their presence consecrate your life and your talent, your song and your speech, your thought and your dream to the motherland. O poet, see visions from the hill tops and spread abroad the message of hope to the toilers in the valleys".

questions with care and dispassion. Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade was the most outstanding of the thinkers who were guiding the activities of the Sarvajanik Sabha.

Ranade was an institution by himself. He was the centre and source of the many liberal and progressive movements that influenced thinking and action in the social and political fields during the time. He had the marvellous gift of attracting young men of promise and putting them in charge of work that suited their aptitude and temperament so that each one of them became, in his assigned fields, a potent instrument for promoting human welfare. Ranade's remorseless devotion to work inspired young men to work for the chosen ideal with faith, courage and devotion. It is said that the greater achievement of Ranade was Gokhale himself.

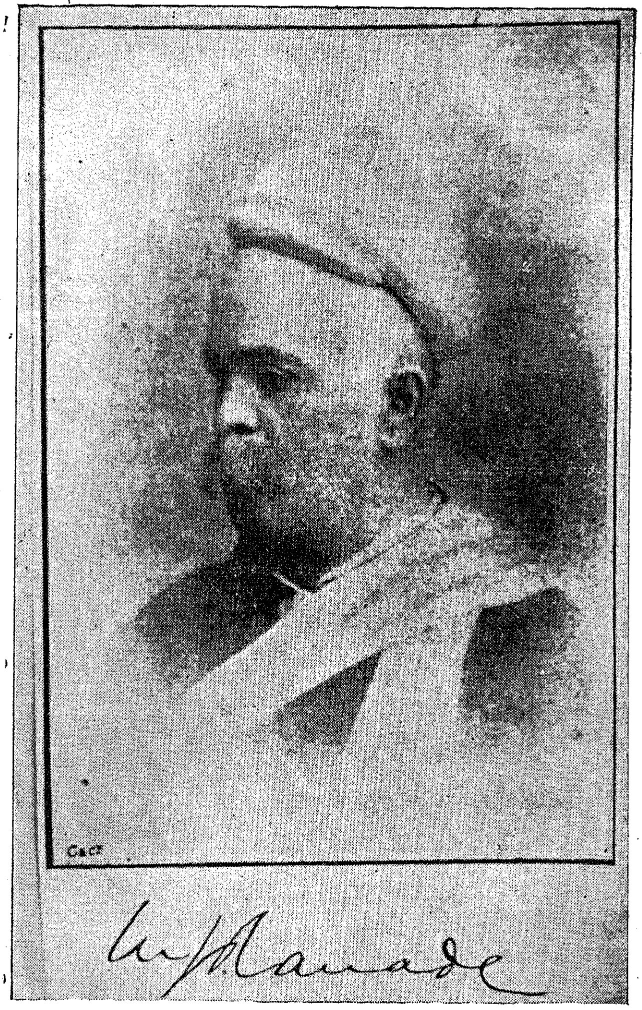
At Ranade's feet

Gokhale was no doubt dazzled by the massive intellect of Ranade. But, what attracted him to Ranade were the latter's moral qualities. He admired his serenity, self-control, compassion and gentleness more than his intellectual gifts. "It is no exaggeration to say", writes Gokhale, "that younger men who came in personal contact with him felt as in a holy presence, not only uttering nothing base but afraid even of thinking unworthy thought while in his company".

Speaking about Gokhale's relationship with Ranade, Prof. J. R. Raju writes, "The story of this friendship is one of the most beautiful romances of modern Indian history. For years, they were engaged together in the close study of the progress and destiny of nations, the inner meaning of public events, the far-off results of action, the discipline of failure, service and sacrifice and the infinite play of human motive and passion, not only in profound treatises of political philosophy but also in the ephemeral effusions of the daily press and in ponderous Government publication. Surely, there is no fairer sight on earth than the close communion of two such kindred spirits and it has brought untold blessings in its train on us all".

Gokhale's entry into politics was significant not for the promise of achievement it held out but for the light it shed on the path of public workers dedicated to the service of the country. The ideals he worked for, the principles he laid down, the values he emphasised and the traditions he built up might perhaps not have attracted the attention they deserved during his time, so tossed and torn by controversial storms. But they acquired importance within five years after his passing and helped the whole nation to function on a higher moral and spiritual level.

Gokhale was acutely conscious of the deplorable moral and spiritual level of the people. He felt that the moral elevation of the people should precede any



big political advance. So he imparted a great moral fervour to political work. To him the political problem was part of the moral problem. In his dealings both with the wooden alien Government and his unsparing political opponents, he showed extraordinary fairness and restraint and avoided questioning their motives and good faith. He always stressed the primacy of means over ends and the importance of adhering to truth in all our dealings.

Stress on moral climate

Gokhale believed that one of the pre-requisites for the creation and maintenance of a moral climate in the country is to insist on people desiring to enter public life to undergo a course of rigorous apperenticeship as in the case of lawyers, doctors, businessmen and others. He felt that unless public workers are properly trained and disciplined, they would fall ready victims to the dangers and temptations of public life. He said that much harm would result from immature minds taking to politics.

The training that Gokhale had had under masters with exacting standards was reflected in his public work. The first striking proof of this was provided

by the evidence he gave before the Welby Commission. Gokhale who was hardly thirty was sent to England as the spokesman of the Deccan Sabha to present India's case before the Welby Commission which was appointed to enquire into the administration and management of military and civil expenditure in the country. Gokhale, who toiled for full four months to prepare the memorandum to be placed before the Commission, gave a brilliant account of himself before the members. He showed, during the course of a severe cross- examination by members who were twice as old as he, extraordinary grasp of intricate financial problems and gave clear and cogent answers to all their difficult and searching questions. Gokhale became a hero overnight.

Marshalling of facts

The same thoroughgoing study of problems, the same marshalling of facts to support his case, the same inexorable logic and the same dignity and fairness in criticism characterised all his speeches and writings on public questions. Whether he was demanding the holding of simultaneous examinations in Delhi and London for recruitment to civil service or arguing the case for the reduction in military expenditure, whether he was advocating the reduction of tax burden or stressing the need for effecting economics in administrative expenditure, he was fully armed with facts. Never once was he proved wrong; never once were the facts and figures he gave questioned. He pressed his case, whether on the floor of the Council or in a well-documented memorandum, with great conscientiousness, never caring for the result. Once, when Gokhale received a two-line reply from the Government to a weighty memorandum he prepared on the famine conditions in Bijapur and Sholapur districts, he expressed his keen disappointment to Ranade and told him that all his work was wasted. Justice Ranade replied : " These memorials are nominally addressed to the Government; in reality they are addressed to the people ".

From then on Gokhale used every forum as the people's forum. He was a polished speaker, a great debater and parliamentarian. He criticised but never offended. He was firm but was never obstinate. He was considerate even to his opponents. He had nothing of the grand manner about him. But his speeches always impressed, always carried conviction, always evoked respect. He had the extraordinary gift of elevating common things by linking them with great men, great events.

Gokhale always believed in fair and responsible criticism. He checked up his facts before coming out with his views. Once he was tripped. While he was in Elngland to give evidence before the Welby Commission, he received letters from his close friends and associates about the behaviour of British soldiers who were put in charge of enforcing plague regulations in Poona. In one of the letters it was alleged that two cases of violation of the modesty of women by British soldiers had come to light. Gokhale, who felt outraged by this conduct wrote to British newspapers and arranged to focus British public opinion on this issue. Official sources described the report as baseless and started a campaign against Gokhale.

Gokhale who returned to India in glory was asked to prove his charge. His informants failed to substantiate their allegations. Gokhale became the victim of a vile official propaganda that he had circulated a lie. Gokhale found that he had no other course left except to offer an unqualified apology to the Government. He tendered the apology knowing well that the Government would not take it in the spirit in which it was offered and that nationalist opinion would not forgive him for the act. He was also aware that this single act might scotch his very political future.

Conscience the spring board

The controversy this incident provoked and the political persecution that followed would have driven any man of lesser mettle mad. But Gokhale threw himself into welfare work with a fiery zeal. He remained absolutely stoic, living up to the ideal placed by Ranade before him. " We have, above all," said Ranade " to learn to bear and forbear, to bear ridicule, insults, even personal injuries at times, and forbear from returning abuse for abuse." Recalling the sufferings he was made to undergo during this period, Gokhale wrote to a friend : " Thanks to the teaching and example of Mr. Justice Ranade. I have long learnt to make conscience—and not popular applause—the spring of my actions. Moreover, remember that the best part of our nature is manifested not in what we enjoy but in what we endure. There is a sublimity and moral elevation in undeserved suffering which nothing can equal and which is almost its own reward"

Gokhale had great admiration for England. His faith in British Democracy was profound. " The British rule ", he said, " in spite of its inevitable drawbacks as a foreign rule, has been on the whole a great instrument of progress for our people. Its continuance means the continuance of that peace and order which it alone can maintain in the present circumstances of the country." He believed that, while working for self-Government, they should educate the people carry out necessary social reforms to remove the obstacles and restrictions in the way of the unity of our people and prepare them to discharge their responsibilities as citizens in a disciplined and orderly way.

He was particularly keen on spreading education among the people. " The highest level reached by an Indian," he said, " may be the same as that reached by a European ; but the average level of Indians is deplorably below that of Europeans. The great task before us

is to try to raise this average level. When this average level is raised, the towering personalities of whom we now see but very few will increase considerably in number". He sponsored a bill tc introduce free and compulsory education in Municipal towns to start with. The then Government did not accept the Bill.

Gokhale had to contend against two mighty force all his life—a powerfully entrenched, wooden, alien, Government, which though fully appreciative of his moderate, constructive proposals, was least willing to move in the direction of reform and a militant growing nationalist section which believed that, not petitions, speeches and memorials that would make the imperialists yield but pressure of surging public opinions. Gokhale fought a losing battle all the time. His failures provided grist to the mill of extremists and helped them mount their onslaughts against the ruling power. But he was not dismayed by his failures nor angry with his opponents who spared no opportunity to assail him for clinging to methods which had proved barren and for reposing faith in persons who had two sets of values, one for their own country and another for ours. But, Gokhale continued his work in the faith that men of his type constituted the stones that were ground down in the foundation for a great edifice.

The Servants of India Society which he founded in 1905 enshrined the ideals that he stood for and worked for all his life. Through it he aimed to provide the nation a steady supply of trained, disciplined, dedicated workers who would serve the nation in the different fields of welfare and development.

The Gokhale tradition

If Ranade fulfilled himself through Gokhale, Gokhale fulfilled himself through Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji was the meeting point of three perennial rivers—Gokhale, Tilak and Tolstoy. The ideas, ideals and principles of these mighty men merged into the Mahatma to come out as the Ganga to awaken, fertilise and elevate the masses to hitherto unknown levels of thought and action. The stress on primacy of means over ends, the exphasis on moral values, the scrupulous regard to truth, the accent on fairness and consideration to opponents, the readiness for an honourable compromise these are Gokhale's bequest to Gandhi. Swadeshi, boycott of British goods, national education, organisation of the masses for relentless struggle against the imperialist power, the call for sacrifice and suffering for the cause of Swaraj—these were the legacies of the Lokamanya. Gokhale and the Lokamanya, who were bitter opponents all their lives, fused into Gandhiji to realise the dream for which they pursued different paths, adopted different methods and forged different weapons. It was the decree of destiny that Gandhiji should integrate Gokhale and Tilak to lead India to freedom. For, Tilak and Gokhale lived and did only for the cause of India's freedom and progress.

GANDHIJI'S MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE

Loyalty is an active feeling. It implies not merely refraining from any hostile acts against the order to which we are loyal, but also a readiness to rush to its support, if its existence is in any way threatened. If we are loyal in this spirit, we may fight if the situation requires it with a clear conscience any individual measures or any series of measures of particular administrations, with all legitimate weapons at our disposal. A magnificent instance of such loyalty has been supplied by our great countryman, Mr. Gandhi. For the last two years he has been engaged in fighting a series of harsh and insulting measures of the Transvaal Government (South Africa) in a manner for which we have no parallel to show. But, even while so engaged, he has not given the least ground to his worst opponent, to cast any reasonable doubt on his attitude towards England. This feeling of loyalty is not one to be trotted out for official favour or demonstrated at official biding. It must spring out of our very love for our country and it must be sustained by our clear recognition of what is necessary in our best interest.

—From Gokhale's public speech at Bombay on 9th October 1909

Gokhale
MY POLITICAL GURU

आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धाऽऽश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः ।
त्वादृङ्नो भूयान्नचिकेतः प्रष्टा ॥

Wonderful is the teacher, and equally clever the pupil. Wonderful is he who comprehends it when taught by an able preceptor. Oh! Nachiketas, may we often get enquirers like thee!

Though Gandhiji had the unique opportunity of meeting almost all the great leaders of India like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Bhandarkar, Ranade, Tilak and others nobody inspired him so much as Gokhale. Gandhiji was the inheritor of the moral estate of Gokhale. Installing Gokhale in his heart as his guru, he became the shining exemplar of the ethical and moral traditions of his master. The following are excerpts from "Gokhale My Political Guru", a collection of Mahatma Gandhiji's speeches and writings on Gokhale.

Discipleship, however, is a sacred personal matter. I fell at Dadabhai's feet in 1888, but he seemed to be too far away from me. I could be as son to him, not disciple. A disciple is more than son. Discipleship is a second birth. It is a voluntary surrender. [*Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa in* 1896, *to plead the cause of the Indians in South Africa. He, therefore met almost all the leaders in this connection. It was at this time he met Gokhale for the first time at Poona.*] In 1896 I met almost all the known leaders of India in connection with my South African mission. Justice Ranade awed me. I could hardly talk in his presence. Badruddin Tyabji fathered me, and asked me to be guided by Ranade and Pherozeshah. The latter became a patron. His will had to be law. 'You must address a public meeting on the 26th September and you must be punctual'. I obeyed. On the 25th evening I was to wait on him. I did.

'Have you written out your speech?' he inquired.

'No, Sir'.

'That won't do, young man. Can you write it out tonight?

'Munshi, you must go to Mr. Gandhi and receive the manuscript from him. It must be printed overnight and you must send me a copy.' Turning to me, he added, 'Gandhi, you must not write a long speech, you do not know Bombay audiences cannot stand long address.' I bowed.

found his mentor

The lion of Bombay taught me to take orders. He did not make me his disciple. He did not even try.

I went thence to Poona. I was an utter stranger. My host first took me to Tilak. I met him surrounded by his companions. He listened, and said, "We must arrange a meeting for you. But perhaps you do not know that we have unfortunately two parties. You must give us a non-party man as chairman. Will you see Dr. Bhandarkar?" I consented and retired.

I have no clear impression of Tilak, except to recall that he shook off my nervousness by his affectionate familiarity. I went thence, I think, to Gokhale, and then to Dr. Bhandarkar. The latter greeted me as a teacher his pupil.

'You seem to be an earnest and enthusiastic young man. Many people do not come to see me at this the hottest part of the day. I never nowadays attend Public Meetings. But you have recited such a pathetic story that I must make an exception in your favour.'

I worshipped the venerable doctor with his wise face. But I could not find for him a place on that little throne. It was still unoccupied. I had many heroes but no king.

You are my Man

It was different with Gokhale, I cannot say why I met him at his quarters on the college ground. It was like meeting an old friend, or better still a mother after a long separation. His gentle face put me at ease in a moment. His minute inquiries about myself and my doings in South Africa at once enshrined him in my heart. And as I parted from him, I said to myself, 'You are my Man'. And from that moment Gokhale never lost sight of me. In 1901 on my second return from South Africa, we came closer still. He simply took me in hand, and began to fashion me. He was concerned about how I spoke, dressed, walked and ate. My mother was not more solicitous about me than Gokhale. There was, so far as I am aware, no reserve between us. It was really a case of love at first sight, and it stood the severest strain in 1913. He seemed to me all I wanted as a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. It does not matter to me that he may not have been any of these things. It was enough for me that I could discover no fault in him to cavil at. He was and remains for me the most perfect man on the political field.

He gave me an affectionate welcome, and his manner immediately won my heart. With him too this was my first meeting, and yet it seemed as though we were renewing an old friendship. Sir Pherozeshah had seemed to me like the Himalaya, the Lokamanya like the ocean, but Gokhale was as the Ganges. One could have a refreshing bath in the holy river. The Himalaya was unscalable, and one could not easily launch forth on the sea, but the Ganges invited one to its bosom. It was a joy to be on it with a boat and an oar. Gokhale closely examined me, as a schoolmaster would examine a candidate seeking admission to a school. He told me whom to approuch and how to approach them. He asked to have a look at my speech. He showed me over the college, assured me that he was always at my disposal, asked me to let him know the result of the interview with Dr. Bhandarkar, and sent me away exultantly happy. In the sphere of politics the place that Gokhale occupied in my heart during his lifetime and occupies even now was and is absolutely unique.

Gokhale visits South Africa

[*Towards the end of* 1896 *Gandhiji returned to South Africa and in* 1912 *Gokhale visited South Africa in response to Gandhiji's request. He reached Cape Town on October* 22, 1912.]

I had been requesting Gokhale and other leaders to go to South Africa and to study the condition of the Indian settlers on the spot. But I doubted whether any of them would really come over. Mr. Ritch had been trying to have some Indian leader visit the sub-continent. But who would go when the struggle was at a very low ebb? Gokhale was in England in 1911. He was a student of the struggle in South Africa. He had initiated debates in the Legislative Council of India and moved a resolution (February 25, 1910) in favour of prohibiting the recruitment of indentured labour for Natal, which was carried. I was in communication with him all along. He conferred with the Secretary of State for India and informed him of his intention to proceed to South

Gandhiji with Gokhale in South Africa in 1912.

AN EXALTED SPIRIT

It is one of the privileges of my life that I know Mr. Gandhi intimately and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth. Mr. Gandhi is one of those men, who, living an austerely simple life, themselves and devoted to all the highest principles of love of their fellow-beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give them a new vision.

—GOKHALE

Africa and acquaint himself with the facts of the case at first hand. The Minister approved of Gokhale's mission. Gokhale wrote to me asking me to arrange a programme for a six weeks' tour and indicating the latest date when he must leave South Africa. We were simply overjoyed.

* * *

Gokhale landed at Cape Town on October 22, 1912. His health was very much more delicate than I had expected. He restricted himself to a particular diet, and he could not endure much fatigue. The programme I had framed was much too heavy for him, and I therefore cut it down as far as possible. Gokhale was ready to do through the whole programme as it originally stood if no modification was possible. I deeply repented of my folly in drawing up an onerous programme without consulting him. Some changes were made but much had to be left as it was. I had not grasped the necessity of securing absolute privacy for Gokhale and I had the greatest difficulty in securing it. Still I must in all humility state in the interests of truth that as I was fond of and proficient in waiting upon the sick and the elderly, as soon as I had realized my folly I revised all the arrangements so as to be able to give Gokhale great privacy and peace. I acted as his secretary throughout the tour.

* * *

Success repeated

As Gokhale went from one place to another in the course of his tour, the Cape Town success was repeated and confirmed. For the time being, at any rate, the colour bar was taken down everywhere. Receptions were held in other places as in Cape Town, where Indians and the Whites sat in line and honoured themselves by honouring Gokhale. A banquet was held in Johannesburg to which were invited 400 persons including about 150 well-known Europeans. The Mayor acted as president. The Europeans of Johannesburg are a discerning lot, and they vied with one another in shaking hands with Gokhale for the simple reason that in the speech he had made before them they had evidence of his deep affection for his own country as well as his sense of justice and appreciation of the opposite points of view. Gokhale pleaded for a place of honour for his own people, but he could not utter a word of disrespect for others. If he was anxious to secure the rights of his own countrymen, he was equally solicitous that the rights of others were not infringed. Therefore, everyone had a taste of natural sweetness in his speeches. Gokhale believed that his best speech in South Africa was the one delivered at Johannesburg for over forty-five minutes. I did not notice that any of the audience were tired. The preparations for it had been on for six days previous to the day of the meeting. He acquainted himself sufficiently with the history of the problem and learnt by heart the figures which he had to cite. Then again on the previous night he burnt the midnight oil in order to settle the draft of his speech. The result was that he satisfied the Europeans as well as the Indians.

at Tolstoy farm

The diligence with which Gokhale prepared himself for his meeting with General Botha and General Smuts in Pretoria is never to be forgotten. On the day previous to the interview, he subjected Mr. Kallenbach and me to a searching examination. He himself woke at 3 a.m., and waked up both of us. He had already gone through the papers which we had placed before him. He now intended to cross-examine me and make sure that he himself was fully prepared for the ordeal. I humbly suggested that there was no need for him to take all that trouble; we did not mind if we had to continue our struggle a little longer; and we did not want to sacrifice him for our convenience. But accustomed as he was to throw his whole soul into what-

ever he did, he would not listen to me. How shall I describe his cross-examination or bestow due praise on his infinite capacity for taking points? Such indefatigable industry could not but be crowned with success. The South African cabinet gave an undertaking that a bill conceding the satyagrahis' demands would be brought before the next session of the Union Parliament and that the £3 tax on the ex-indentured labourers would be abolished.

The promise given to Gokhale was not redeemed at the appointed time. But he did not take it lying down. I am sure that the exertions he put forth in 1913 in order to have that promise kept shortened his life by at least ten years. It is impossible to give the reader an idea of the strain he imposed upon himself in organising the agitation in India and collecting funds for the Satyagrahis in South Africa. Indeed if the South African Indians' problems shook India to its depth, it was due to Gokhale's mighty effort. The historic speech made by Lord Hardinge in Madras was also due to his influence. Gokhale was confined to bed on account of anxiety about the South African Indian Problem, and still he would not give himself rest. Cablegrams as lengthy as letters sent by sea mail were received by him at midnight and read as soon as they came in. Replies to these cablegrams were drafted and telegrams sent to the Viceroy at once. Statements to the press were prepared at the same time. In attending to this problem Gokhale could not take his meals or go to bed at the appointed hour and turned night into day. Such unique and selfless devotion is given only to a man of religion.

* * *

Ignorant Affection

[*During his South Africa visit at the request of Gandhiji Gokhale visited the former's Ashram—Tolstoy Farm—and stayed there from November* 2 *to* 4, 1912.]

Gokhale arrived in South Africa while we were still living on the Farm. There was no cot on the Farm, but we borrowed one for Gokhale. There was no room where he could enjoy full privacy. For sitting accommodation we had nothing beyond the benches in our school. Even so, how could we resist the temptation of bringing Gokhale in spite of his delicate health to the Farm? And how could he help seeing it, either? I was foolish enough to imagine that Gokhale would be able to put up with a night's discomfort and to walk about a mile and a half from the station to the Farm. I had asked him beforehand, and he had agreed to everything without bestowing any thought upon it, thanks to his simplicity and overwhelming confidence in me. It rained that day as fate would have it, and I was not in a position suddenly to make any special arrangement. I have never forgotten the trouble to which I put Gokhale that day in my ignorant affection. The hardship was too much for him to bear and he caught a chill. We could not take him to the kitchen and dining hall. He had been put up in Mr. Kallenbach's room. His dinner would get cold while we brought it from the kitchen to his room. I prepared special soup and Kotval special bread for him, but these could not be taken to him hot. We managed as best we could. Gokhale uttered not a syllable, but I understood from his face what a folly I had committed. When Gokhale came to know that all of us slept on the floor, he removed the cot which had been brought for him and had his own bed too spread on the floor. This whole night was a night of repentance for me. Gokhale had a rule in life which seemed to me a bad rule. He would not permit any one except a servant to wait upon him. He had no servant with him during this tour. Mr. Kallenbach and I entreated him to let us massage his feet. But he would not let us even touch

the Disciple

What could a disciple write about his master? How could he write it? The disciple's writing would be but an audacity. The true shishya merges himself in the guru. So he can never be a critic of the guru. Bhakti or devotion has no eye for shortcomings. So there can be no reason for complaint if the public do not accept the judgment of one who refuses to analyse the merits and shortcomings of his subject. The disciple's own behaviour and actions are in fact his comments about the master. I have often said that Gokhale was my political guru. That is why I consider myself incapable of writing about him. Whatever I write would seem but incomplete in my eyes. I believe the relationship between master and disciple is absolutely spiritual. It is not based on arithmetical calculations. The relationship is formed as if of its own accord and in a single instant, and is not capable of breach once it takes shape.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

him, and half jocularly, half angrily said: 'You all seem to think that you have been born to suffer hardships and discomforts, and people like myself have been born to be pampered by you. You must suffer today the punishment for this extremism of yours, I will not let you even touch me. Do you think that you will go out to attend to nature's needs and at the same time keep a commode for me? I will bear any amount of hardship but I will humble your pride'. These words were to use like a thunderbolt, and deeply grieved Mr. Kallenbach and me. The only consolation was, that Gokhale wore a smile on his face all the while. Krishna no doubt was often deeply offended by Arjuna, 'unknowing of His Majesty and careless in the fondness of his love,' but he soon forgot such incidents. Gokhale remembered only our will to serve, though he did not accord us the high privilege of serving him. The deeply affectionate letter he wrote me from Mombasa is still imprinted upon my heart. Gokhale bore everything cheerfully, but till the last never accepted the service which it was in our power to render. He had to take the food, etc., from our hands, but that he could not help.

Don't be in a hurry

'The next morning he allowed no rest either to himself or to us. He corrected all his speeches which we proposed to publish in book form. When he had to write anything, he was in the habit of walking to and fro and thinking it out. He had to write a small letter and I thought that he would soon have done with it. But no, as I twitted him upon it, he gave me a little homily: 'You do not know my way of life. I will not do even the least little thing in a hurry. I will think about it and consider the central idea. I will next deliberate as to the language suited to the subject and then set to write. If every one did as I did, what a huge saving of time there would be? And the nation would be saved from the avalanche of half-baked ideas which now threatens to overwhelm her'.

Gokhale's Praise

[Gandhiji stayed with Gokhale for about a month at Calcutta when he returned to India from South Africa for a second time in 1901. *He again returned to South Africa.]*

From the very first day of my stay with him, Gokhale made me feel completely at home. He treated me as though I were his younger brother, he acquainted himself with all my requirements and arranged to see that I got all I needed. Fortunately my wants were few, and I had cultivated the habit of self-help. I needed very little personal attendance. He was deeply impressed with my habit of fending for myself, my personal cleanliness, perseverance and regularity, and would often overwhelm me with praise.

Gokhale at work

He seemed to keep nothing private from me. He would introduce me to all important people that called on him. Of these the one who stands foremost in my memory is Dr. P. C. Ray. He lived practically next door and was a very frequent visitor.

This is how he introduced Dr. Ray: "This is Prof. Ray who, having a monthly salary of Rs. 800, keeps just Rs. 40 for himself and devotes the balance to public purposes. He is not, and does not want to get married'.

I felt I could never hear too much of the talks between Gokhale and Dr. Ray, as they all pertained to public good or were of educative value. At times they were painful too, containing, as they did, strictures on public men. As a result, some of those whom I had regarded as stalwart fighters began to look quite puny.

To see Gokhale at work was as much a joy as an education. He never wasted a minute. His private relations and friendships were all for public good. All his talks had reference only to the good of the country and were absolutely free from any trace of untruth or insincerity. India's poverty and subjection were matters of constant and intense concern to him. Various people sought to interest him in different things. But he gave every one of them the same reply. "You do the thing yourself. Let me do my own work. What I want is freedom for my country. After that is won, we can think of other things. Today that one thing is enough to engage all my time and energy."

Gokhale used to have a horse-carriage in those days. I did not know the circumstances that had made a horse-carriage a necessity for him, and so I remonstrated with him: "Can't you make use of the tramcar in going about from place to place? Is it derogatory to a leader's dignity?"

Slightly pained, he said, "So you also have failed to understand me! I do not use my Council allowances for my own personal comforts. I envy your liberty to go about in tramcars, but I am sorry I cannot do likewise. When you are the victim of as wide a publicity as I am, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for you to go about in a tramcar. There is no reason to suppose that everything that the leaders do is with a view to personal comfort. I love your simple habits. I live as simply as I can, but some expense is almost inevitable for a man like myself?"

He thus satisfactorily disposed of one of my complaints but there was another which he could not dispose of to my satisfaction. 'But you do not even go out for walks', said I. "Is it surprising that you should be always? Should public work have to leave no time for physical exercises?".

'When do you ever find me free to go out for a walk' he replied.

I had such a great regard for Gokhale that I never strove with him. Though this reply was far from satisfying me, I remained silent. I believed then and I believe even now, that, no matter what amount of work one has, one should always find some time for exercise, just as one does for one's meals. It is my humble opinion that, far from taking away from one's capacity for work, it adds to it.

under Gokhale's Roof

My stay under the roof of Gokhale made my work in Calcutta very easy, brought me into touch with the foremost Bengali families, and was the beginning of my intimate contact with Bengal. I must needs skip over many a reminiscences of this memorable month. Let me simply mention my flying visit to Burma.

GANDHI HAS A RESOLUTION

Our new relation did not show any results immediately. But on the occasion of the Calcutta Congress Session in 1902 where I was present I became fully conscious of my discipleship. I had the privilege of meeting almost all the leaders........ this time also. I saw that Gokhale had not only not forgotten me but actually took me under his charge.

The practical result of his having done so followed as a natural consequence. During the Subjects Committee meeting I felt helpless. While resolutions were under discussion I could not gather enough courage to declare that I too had a resolution on South Africa in my pocket. It was not to be expected that the Committee would spare the evening for me. The leaders were impatient to finish the business on hand. I was trembling with the fear that they would rise any moment. I had no courage to remind even Gokhale of my business. Just at that moment he cried out, 'Gandhi has a resolution on South Africa which we will have to consider.' My joy knew no bounds. This was my first experience of the Congress. So resolutions passed by it had great value in my eyes. The incidents thereafter are many and they are all sacred for me.

—From Gandhiji's "My Experiments with Truth".

1. Servants of India Society headquarters, Poona.

2. A view of the Ranade Industria Institute Buildings : a memorial erected by Gokhale in memory of his Master.

3. Gokhale at the time of]the Welby Commission when he gave evidence before it.

4. Gokhale in England in 1914 as a member of the Public Service Commission.

5. At the reception given by Gandhi to Gokhale at Zanzibar in South Africa (sitting second and third from left).

6. Gokhale with the members of the Servants of India Society. Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Sastri is on the right of Gokhale.

7. At the Congress Session held in Bombay in 1904 under the Presidentship of Sir Henry Cotton. Gokhale (standing fifth from left) was its Joint Secretary.

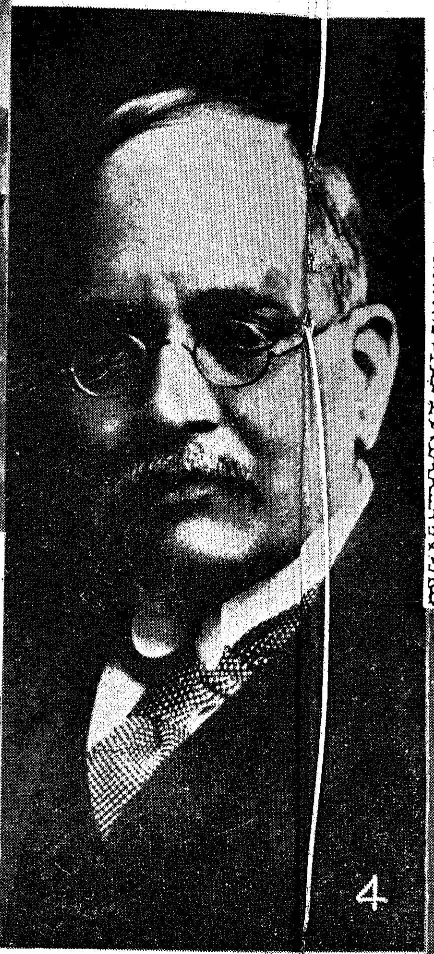
8. Gokhale in academic robes on the eve] of his retirement from the Fergusson College.

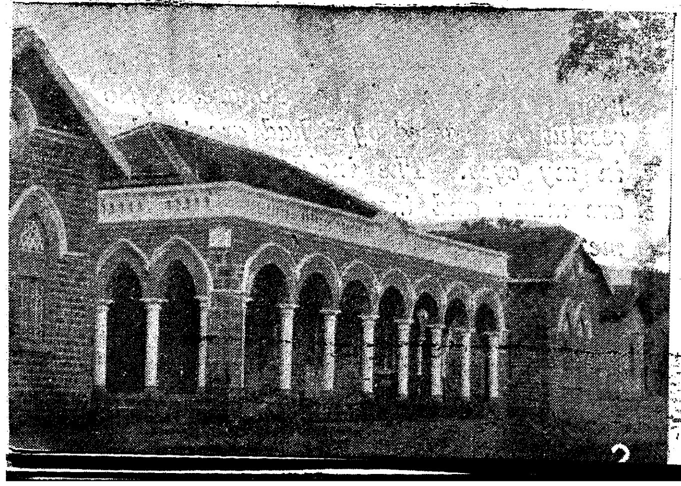
9. Gokhale when he was a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1902, Calcutta, under Lord Curzon.

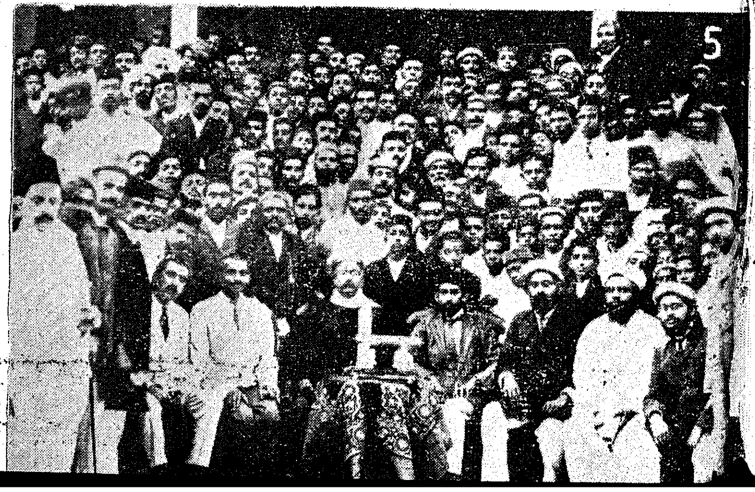
10. Gokhale at the Civic Reception in South Africa in 1912 given in his honour by the Mayor of Johannesburg.

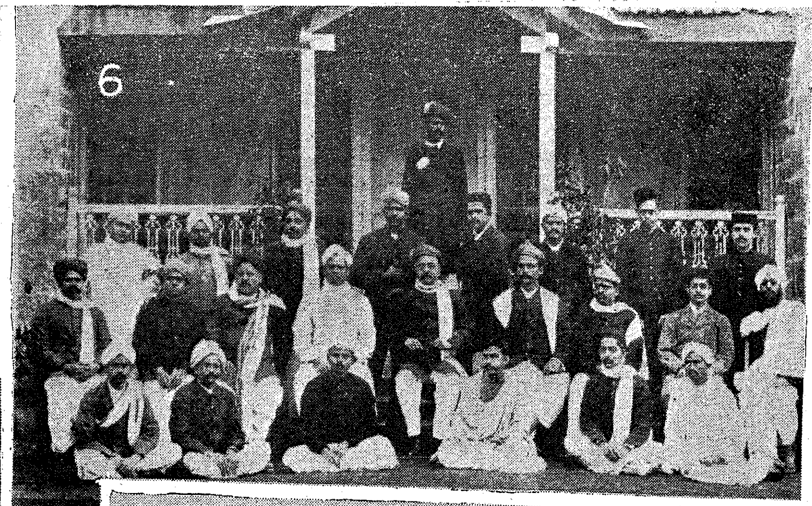
11. Public Service Commission's visit to Madras in 1913. Gokhale, a member of the Commission, is standing second from left.

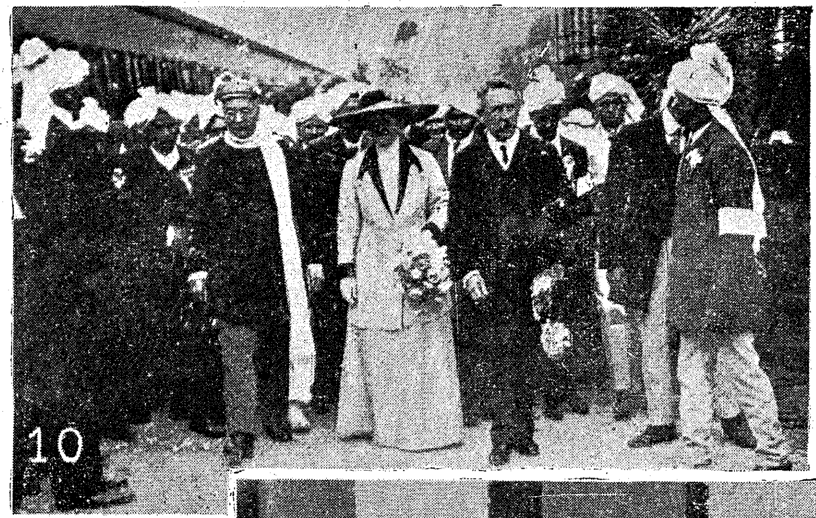
Milestones in the life of the First Servant of India

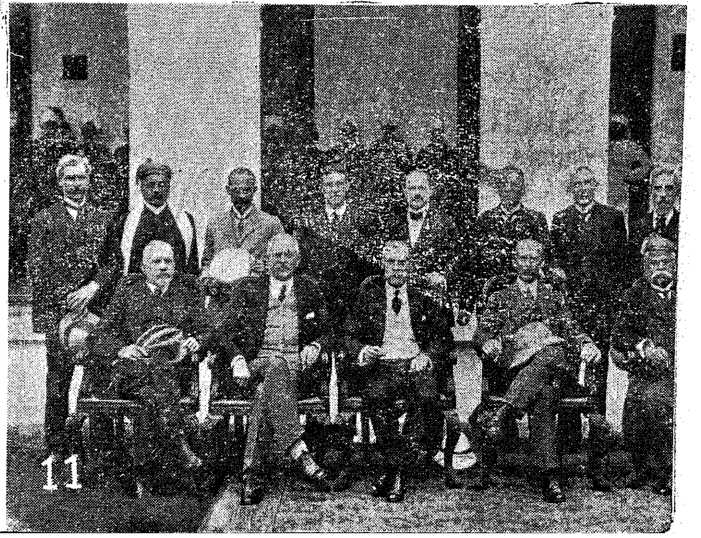












On my return from Burma I took leave of Gokhale. The separation was a wrench, but my work in Bengal, or rather Calcutta, was finished, and I had no occasion to stay any longer.

Third class tour

Before settling down I had thought of making a tour throughout India travelling third class and of acquainting myself with the hardships of third class passengers. I spoke to Gokhale about this. To begin with he ridiculed the idea, but when I explained to him what I hoped to see, he cheerfully approved. I planned to go first to Banaras to pay my respects to Mrs. Besant, who was then ill.

It was necessary to equip myself anew for the third class tour. Gokhale himself gave me a metal tiffin-box and got it filled with sweetballs and puris. I purchased a canvas bag worth twelve annas and a long coat made of Chhaya wool. The bag was to contain this coat, a *dhoti*, a towel and a shirt. I had a blanket as well to cover myself with and a water jug. Thus equipped I set forth on my travels. Gokhale and Dr. Ray came to the station to see me off. I had asked them both not to trouble to come, but they insisted. 'I should not have come if you had gone first class, but now I had to,' said Gokhale.

No one stopped Gokhale from going on to the platform. He was in his silk turban, jacket and *dhoti*. Dr. Ray was in his Bengali dress. He was stopped by the ticket collector, but on Gokhale telling him that he was his friend, he was admitted.

Thus with their good wishes I started on my journey.

At London

[*Gokhale left South Africa for India on November* 17, 1912. *Later when he was in England in* 1914, *at the conclusion of Gandhiji's Satyagraha struggle in South Africa called on him to return to India via London. Gandhiji obeyed. But when Gandhiji reached London on August* 2, *he could not meet Gokhale as he had already gone to Paris for reasons of health. In October, Gokhale returned to London.*]

At the conclusion of the Satyagraha struggle in 1914, I received Gokhale's instructions to return home via London. So in July Kasturba, Kallenbach and I sailed for England.

I have already referred to the attack of pleurisy I had in England. Gokhale returned to London soon after. Kallenbach and I used regularly to go to him. Our talks were mostly about the war.

GURU'S REGARD

In all my life I have known only two men who have affected me spiritually in the manner that Mr. Gandhi does—our great patriarch Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji and my late master Mr. Ranade—men before whom not only are we ashamed of doing anything unworthy, but in whose presence our very minds are afraid of thinking anything that is unworthy.

—GOKHALE

When I got pleurisy this also became a topic of daily discussion. My dietetic experiments were going on even then. My diet consisted, among other things, of groundnuts, ripe and unripe bananas, lemon, olive oil, tomatoes and grapes. I completly eschewed milk, cereals, pulses and other things.

Dr. Jivraj Mehta treated me. He pressed me hard to resume milk and cereals, but I was obdurate. The matter reached Gokhale's ears. He had not much regard for my reasoning in favour of a fruitarian diet, and he wanted me to take whatever the doctor prescribed for my health.

Gokhale's pressure

It was no easy thing for me not to yield to Gokhale's pressure. When he would not take a refusal, I begged him to give me twenty-four hours for thinking over the question. As Kallenbach and I returned home that evening, we discussed where my duty lay. He had been with me in my experiment. He liked it, but I saw that he was aggreeable to my giving it up if my health demanded it. So I had to decide for myself according to the dictates of the inner voice.

I spent the whole night thinking over the matter. To give up the experiment would mean renouncing all my ideals in that direction, and yet I found no flaw in them. The question was how far I should yield to Gokhale's loving pressure, and how far I might modify my experiment in the so-called interests of health. I finally decided to adhere to the experiment in so far as the motive behind it was chiefly religious, and to yield to the doctor's advice where the motive was mixed. Religious considerations had been predominant in the giving up of milk. I had before me a

picture of the wicked processes the govals in Calcutta adopted to extract the last drop of milk from their cows and buffaloes. I also had the feeling that, just as meat was not man's food, even so, animals' milk could not be man's food. So I got up in the morning with the determination to adhere to my resolve to abstain from milk. This greatly relieved me. I dreaded to approach Gokhale, but I trusted him to respect my decision.

Gandhiji's painful decision

In the evening Kallenbach and I called on Gokhale at the National Liberal Club. The first question he asked me was : "Well, have you decided to accept the doctor's advice ?"

I gently but firmly replied : "I am willing to yield on all points except one about which I beg you not to press me. I will not take milk, milk-products or meat. If not to take these things should mean my death, I feel I had better face it."

"Is this your final decision ?" asked Gokhale.

"I am afraid I cannot decide otherwise," said I. "I know that my decision will pain you, but I beg your forgiveness."

With a certain amount of pain but with deep affection Gokhale said : "I do not approve of your decision. I do not see any religion in it. But I won't press you any more," with these words he turned to Dr. Jivaraj Mehta and said : "Please don't worry him any more. Prescribe anything you like within the limit he has set for himself."

The doctor expressed dissent, but was helpless. He advised me to take mung soup, with a dash of asafoetida in it. To this I agreed. I took it for a day or two, but it increased my pain. As I did not find it suitable, I went back to fruits and nuts. The doctor of course went on with his external treatment. The latter somewhat relieved my pain, but my restrictions were to him a sore handicap.

Meanwhile Gokhale left for home, as he could not stand the October fogs of London.

* * *

[*London's foggy weather did not suit Gokhale's health. He, therefore, left England and reached India on November* 20, 1914. *Gandhiji returned to India in January* 1915.]

Gokhale's affection

The moment I reached Bombay, Gokhale sent me word that the Governor was desirous of seeing me, and that it might be proper for me to respond before I left for Poona. Accordingly I called on His Excellency.

After this I went to Poona. It is impossible for me to set down all the reminiscences of this precious time. Gokhale and the members of the Servants of India Society overwhelmed me with affection. So far as I recollect, Gokhale had summoned all of them to meet me. I had a frank talk with them all on every sort of subject.

Gokhale was very keen that I should join the Society and so was I, but the members felt that, as there was a great difference between my ideas and methods of work and theirs, it might not be proper for me to join the Society. Gokhale believed that, in spite of my insistence on my own principles, I was equally ready and able to tolerate theirs.

"But", he said, "the members of the Society have not yet understood your readiness for compromise. They are tenacious of their principles, and quite independent. I am hoping that they will accept you, but if they don't, you will not for a moment think that they are lacking in respect or love for you. They are hesitating to take any risk lest their high regard for you should be jeopardized. But whether you are formally admitted as a member or not, I am going to look upon you as one."

I informed Gokhale of my intention. Whether I was admitted as a member or not, I wanted to have an Ashram where I could settle down with my Phoenix family, preferably somewhere in Gujarat, as, being a Gujarati, I thought I was best fitted to serve the country through serving Gujarat. Gokhale liked the idea. He said : "You should certainly do so. Whatever may be the result of your talks with the members, you must look to me for the expenses of the Ashram, which I will regard as my own".

Came but fainted

My heart over flowed with joy. It was a pleasure to feel free from the responsibility of raising funds, and to realize that I should not be obliged to set about the work all on my own, but that I should be able to count on a sure guide whenever I was in difficulty. This took a great load off my mind.

So the late Dr. Dev was summoned and told to open an account for me in the Society's books and to give me whatever I might require for the Ashram and for public expenses.

I now prepared to go to Shantiniketan. On the eve of my departure Gokhale arranged a party of selected friends, taking good care to order refreshments of my

liking, i.e., fruits and nuts. The party was held just a few paces from his room, and yet he was hardly in a condition to walk across and attend it. But his affection for me got the better of him and he insisted on coming. He came, but fainted and had to be carried away. Such fainting was not a new thing with him and so when he came to, he sent word that we must go on with the party.

Mahatma Gokhale

[*Message sent on February* 19, 1916, *the First Anniversary of the death of Sri Gopal Krishna Gokhale in Bombay.*]

" Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as sacrifice or gift, whatever austerity you perform, O Kaunteya, dedicate it all to me."

" I shall have lived to some purpose only if I see Hari (the Lord) face to face as I laugh and play. O Uddahava, Krishna, Muktananda's Master, is the Lord of our life."

It seems that Mahatma Gokhale functioned as if the words addressed by Krishna to Arjuna had been addressed to him by India, the mother of us all, and had been made by him the guiding principle of his life. For it will be readily admitted that whatever he did, whatever he enjoyed, whatever he sacrificed, whatever he gave in charity, whatever austerities he performed, he dedicated them all to his motherland.

The Gopi's devotion to Krishna as pictured by Muktanand is a just measure of Gokhale's devotion to India.

What is the moral of Gokhale's life ? What legacy has he left for us ?

These questions were answered by Gokhale himself in his last words to the members of the Servants of India Society who were present beside his death-bed :

Don't waste time

" Don't waste your time in writing a biography or setting up a statue, but pour your whole soul into the service of India. Then only shall you be counted among her true and faithful servants."

We have also before us Gokhale's views as regards the implications of service to the country. The Congress organization must be maintained in full strength : people should be brought to a realization of the real state of the country through speeches and writings ; education should be made available to every Indian child. But to what end ? And in what manner? As we try to answer these questions, we become aware of Gokhale's standpoint. When he drew up the constitution for the Servants of India Society, he said that it was the Society's object to spiritualize public life. This is a comprehensive definition.

Gokhale's life was that of a man of religion. Every thing he did was done in the spirit of a devotee as I can testify. Gokhale once called himself an agnostic. He observed that he had not, but wished he had, Ranade's faith. Even so I could discern a religious strain in his work. It would not be improper to say that his very doubt was inspired by religion. A man who leads a dedicated life, who is simple in habits, who is the very image of truth, who is full of humanity, who calls nothing his own such a man is a man of religion, whether he himself is or is not conscious of it. Such was Gokhale as I could see during the twenty years of my friendship with him.

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Hindu-Muslim Unity

As regards Hindu-Muslim tension too, Gokhale's standpoint was purely religious. Once a Hindu monk came to him in order to prevail upon him to grant an inferior status to the Musalmans and to secure an advantage for the Hindus. But Gokhale would not listen to him. The monk complained that the great leader did not take pride in Hinduism. At this Gokhale frowned and said, ' If Hinduism consists in doing what you say, I am not a Hindu. Please, therefore, leave'. And the so-called monk left the man who was a real Sannyasi.

Fearlessness was a very important element in Gokhale's composition. Indeed this virtue is an indispensable quality in a man of religion. There was a reign of terror in Poona subsequent to the assassination of Mr. Rand and Lt. Ayerst. Gokhale was in England at the time and referring to it he spoke to a committee of influential members of the British Parliament. Some statements made in that speech could not be substantiated later on. Therefore, when Gokhale returned to India, he tendered an apology to the European officials whom he had charged with misconduct and thus incurred the displeasure of some ignorant people who called him a coward and advised him to retire from public life. He rejected this advice with the noble words :

' Public duties undertaken at the bidding of no man, cannot be laid down at the desire of any one. Whether, one works on a higher plane or a lower one is a matter of

small importance. One is always glad of the appreciation by the public of what one has done . . . . . . But it is not the highest purpose of existence, nor really the highest. If it comes, to give the words of Herbert Spencer, 'well ; if not well also, though not so well'.

Gokhale did his duty conscientiously and never wasted a single selfish thought on what view the public would take of his action. I believe he had the capacity cheerfully to mount the gallows for the country's sake if necessary. I know to mount the gallows more than once was very much easier for him than to face a difficult situation. But he never so much as thought of turning his back to it.

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Lesson from Master

If, therefore, we would learn a lesson from the life of this great patriot, we should follow his method of working in the spirit of a devotee. Everyone of us cannot become a member of the Supreme Legislature, and members of that Legislature are not always seen in the ranks of the servants of the nation. Every one cannot serve on the Public Service Commission and men designated as its members are not always found rendering service to the country. We cannot all acquire learning like him and learned men do not always serve the people. But we can all cultivate virtues like courage, truthfulness, patience, humility, a sense of justice, straightforwardness and perseverance and dedicate them to the nation. This is the spirit of a devotee. This is what Gokhale meant when he spoke of 'Public life being spiritualized'. All who conduct themselves in such a spirit of dedication will always see their way clear before them and claim a share in the legacy which Gokhale has left for us all. Such devoted workers will be endowed with all such gifts as they need, as the Lord has promised, and Gokhale's life is an illustration of that promise having been abundantly fulfilled.

Won his Certificate

When Gokhale came to South Africa he had with him a scarf which was a gift from Mahadev Govind Ranade. He treasured the memento with utmost care and used it only on special occasions. One such occasion was the banquet given in his honour by the Johannesburg Indians. The scarf was creased and needed ironing. It was not possible to send it to the laundry and get it back in time. I offered to try my art.

'I can trust to your capacity as a lawyer, but not as a washerman,' said Gokhale. 'What if you should soil it ? Do you know what it means to me ?'

With this he narrated with much joy, the story of the gift. I still insisted, guaranteed good work, got his permission to iron it, and won his certificate. After that I did not mind if the rest of the world refused me its certificate.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY

1821

It is now sixty-one years since the Servants of India Society has been founded by the late Gopalakrishna Gokhale. The founding of this brotherhood was the outcome of his conviction that the country needed a selfless and intelligent band of workers to dedicate their lives to the service of the country.

Its objects are the training of national missionaries for the service of India and the promotion by all constitutional means of the interests of the Indian people without distinction of caste or creed. In starting this institution Gokhale had in view the great work of rearing the superstructure on the foundations laid after the jungle has been cleared. In the preamble to the Constitution of the Society the British connection was accepted as a divine dispensation for the India's good.

The object

The Constitution laid emphasis on character and capacity building. It laid down, " public life must be spiritualised. Love of the country must so fill the heart and all else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the motherland, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of Providence which nothing can shake—equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country ".

This preamble has been a source of inspiration to the Society during last 61 years of its existence. Its members have been pioneers in the service of Adivasis and in the Trade Union movements. They have contributed greatly to the amelioration of Indians, especially labourers, abroad. Their record of succour to sufferers from floods, famine, epidemics and earthquakes is shining. They have done splendid work in opening avenues of education to women, they have striven for the uplift of " the depressed classes ", started co-operative societies and rendered innumerable other acts of service as well. Leading personalities of the Society like Srinivasa Sastri, Thakker Bapa, N.M. Joshi, G.K. Deodhar, S.G. Vaze, H.N. Kunzru, Kodanda Rao, K. G. Limaye and Bakhale, are men of whom any country can be proud.

Gokhale was a person of a spiritual mould and he wanted his Society to be of similar mould. It is worthy of note that Gandhiji also started ashrams, with objects similar to those of the Servants of India Society and himself sought entry into the Society. Similarly Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru also was attracted in those days to Gokhale's Servants of India Society. These people could not join it since perhaps they felt that its politics were too moderate for them.

The starting of the Servants of India Society bore testimony to the fact that Gokhale was a constructive thinker. Even if all his speeches, writings and political work were to be forgotten, one thing that would abide in the history of the nation is the society which he founded for the service of the people.

The Society has branches at Bombay, Nagpur, Madras and Allahabad apart from the central office at Poona. The members of the society who are drawn from the States of U.P., Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Mysore and Madras have been engaged in carrying on their activities in their chosen field in their respective States.

The Madras branch

The Madras branch of the Society maintains a library, a reading room, holds public meetings on questions of current importance, interests itself in all social welfare work in the city by co-ordinating its work with agencies with similar aims and objects, runs a free Ayurvedic Dispensary in Chetput, and boarding homes and schools, for the Scheduled Tribes, such as the Todas and Kotas in the Nilgiris, and for the Yenadis in the Sri Harikota Island in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh respectively.

Gokhale started this Society with the main object of serving the people to improve their lot and to guide them to lead a life of contentment and service. Though the country had achieved Independence, the objects for which he had started this Society has not been fully covered. There is yet a lot to be done and not only this Society but institutions of this kind has much wider scope to serve the people to-day and the only need of the hour is getting proper persons with a spirit of service, integrity and selflessness.

GOKHALE
THE SOCIAL REFORMER

India, in the latter half of the 19th Century was stirring for a new awakening. This was more pronounced in Bengal and Maharashtra. Maharashtra, in particular, was in great ferment.

The people of Maharashtra were heirs to the imperial tradition of Shivaji. Brave, proud and conscious of their great heritage, they did not reconcile themselves to the tightening hold of the British power over the land.

This seething resentment against the lot which had befallen them found expression through two well-defined but opposing schools of thought. One school, true to the spirit of resistance and revolt imbedded in the blood-stream of the Maratha people, was for organising the people to fight the foreigner. The other, alive to reasons that were responsible for the downfall of the Maratha power, was for eradicating all the social evils that divided and weakened the people and for training them for parliamentary work. This school laid great stress on social reform, spread of education and on seeking remedy for economic and political injustices through well-documented, closely-reasoned discussion in the press, on the platforms and on the floors of legislatures. Justice Ranade was the spearhead of this school of thought. The influence which Justice Ranade exercised on contemporary thought was such that the cream of Maratha society rallied round him. A large number of young men accepted his intellectual leadership and carried his message from one corner of the country to the other. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was the most outstanding of this band of young men who came under the spell of Ranade.

Conservative Revolutionary

A great political saint, Gopal Krishna Gokhale was also a social reformer, though his fame as a politician of sterling character and virtuous understanding has eclipsed his contribution as a social reformer to the growth and development of our nation. Of course it was a fact that Gokhale hesitated to take intensively active part in social reform movement because he had married a second wife while the first one was alive. That the first wife was chronically ailing, that he obtained her consent for his second marriage, and that everyone around him who counted for anything Okayed his action—all this did not satisfy his sensitive conscience. He felt diffident to talk of social reform as if he was, because of his second marriage, incompetent though he actually did much in the field of social reformation. He was indeed made of a stuff which gets inflammed when it sees a piece of injustice committed and perpetuated around him. He was indeed a man endowed with a sense of righteousness and righteous anger. He never used fiery words to express his zeal for social reform; but he went about the job in his usual quiet and constructive manner. A conservative revolutionary, he was for reform but reform with caution. A keen student of Edmund Burke, he strove his best to put his words of wisdom into practice. It was so in his social as well as political life. Everything superstitious and going against the dictates of commonsense, always got his disapproval.

Refused to expiate

It happened in the early part of his life when he had not yet made his mark as a national leader and famed politician. A Christian organisation in Poona invited a few local citizens of leading to a meeting in which a missionary was to speak. The meeting over, tea was served to the invitees. To take tea at the hands of Christians was, in those days, considered not only *infra dig* but a transgression calling for "atonement." When tea was served, Tilak, Ranade and Gokhale did not know what to do. They looked at one another and were in deep puzzlement. Others were also in a quandary. Some took a spoonful. Others threw away the whole contents. Yet others feigned taking the cup to the lip. And Gopalrao Joshi, a convert to Christianity—who renounced Christianity later—had desired to play this practical joke on the leading Hindu citizens, and he published the names of those who attended the function. This created a sensation among the Hindus. It was referred to Sankaracharya, the highest religious authority,

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requesting him to decide the method of atonement. He decided that every one should pay four annas to a Brahmin priest. They were thus ordered to expiate for the error on pain of excommunication. Most of them accepted the verdict. But Gokhale along with fifteen others did not abide by the ruling. It was in his nature, never to submit to superstitious and unreasonable activities.

Education of the masses

It was the reforming zeal in him that made him study the educational problem thoroughly and discuss it threadbare. He was fully convinced that India would only become free when her people were educated on modern lines. Modern science, modern arts and modern ways of thinking alone would enable them to throw off the foreign yoke. As Tilak had said, "their heads reeled with the depraved condition of the country, and that after prolonged thinking they had come to the conclusion that the uplift of the country depended upon education alone."

Gokhale also felt that education was not enough. There should be free and compulsory education. It should be universal. "This question of compulsory and free primary education", Gokhale said in 1910, "is now in this country the question of questions. The well-being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the humanising influence of education depends upon it. The increased efficiency of the individual, the higher general level of intelligence, the stiffening of the moral backbone of large sections of the community, none of those things can come without such education. In fact the whole of our future as a nation is inextricably bound up with it." Again he said next year, "Even if the advantages of an elementary education be put no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement. But elementary education for the mass of the people means something more than a mere capacity to read and write. It means for them a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It means the greater moral and economic efficiency of the individual. It means a higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally. He who reckons these advantages lightly may as well doubt the value of light or fresh air in the economy of human health."

Burning passion

Gokhale who cherished these ideas left no stone unturned to broadcast them through the platform and the press. He aroused the consciousness of the people and Government to the urgent need of the spread of education. He seemed to have taken upon his shoulders the responsibility of spreading education. It was so when he was a teacher. It was so when he was a member in the Imperial Legislative Council. It was so al through his life. The spread of education had indeed been a passion with him.

He was for the spread of female education as well. He said, "a wide diffusion of female education in all its branches is a factor of the highest value to the true well-being of every nation......A wide diffusion of education, with all its solvent influences, among the women of India, is the only means of emancipating their minds from the degrading thraldom to ideas inherited through a long past and that such emancipation will only restore our women to the honoured position which they at one time occupied in India."

It was again the social reform instinct in him that made him support the Civil Marriage Bill. It was his wish that late marriage should come into vogue. It would, he felt, lead to free choice by the marrying parties. He was dead against early marriage. He was for widow remarriage.

The upliftment of the depressed classes which came to be one of the main planks in the life's programme of Mahatma Gandhi—claimed his close attention and care. It is to be noted that he made the members of the Servants of India Society to direct their efforts, *inter alia*, towards the elevation of depressed classes.

Embodiment of sacrifice

It was not mere words when Gandhiji called Gokhale a Mahatma and his political guru. Gokhale held that public life should be spiritualised. He who participates in public activities should, in no way, do anything that would bring discredit to the nation. Gokhale was an embodiment of sacrifice. He never cared for himself. The interest of the nation took precedence over any interest he held dear to his heart. And he never preached what he did not practice. Verily he was, to quote the words of Motilal Nehru, "a noble soul fired by a patriotism all-consuming. A born leader of men, he never aspired to anything but to be the humblest servant of the motherland in whose service he brought such devotion into play that it is now a matter of history. He lived up to the very ideal which he set before himself and his countrymen." His very presence diffused the fragrance of sincerity and sacrifice. His very presence tended to dispel the mist of superstition.

That actions speak louder than words is proved to the hilt in his case. He always shunned publicity. "While on his deathbed", writes Gandhiji, "the Mahatma had declared his ideal. He had said that his soul would not enjoy peace if after his death his biography was written or a memorial raised to him or meetings were held to express sorrow at his passing away from this world. His only desire was that India should lead the life he had led and that the Servants of India Society founded by him progressed and prospered in its mission of service to nation." He was a noble soul who had well lived his life.

Leaves from Gokhale's life

" Some of the text-books that Gokhale had to study, he knew by heart ". To substantiate this, Gokhale's son-in-law, Sri S. B. Dhavale, I.C.S. (Retired), a former Judge of the Patna High Court, narrated an incident which was told him by one of Gokhale's class-mates by name, Savardekar, several decades ago. Once Gokhale did not answer a question put by his master satisfactorily and got himself demoted in the class. Gokhale took this to heart greatly and in anger tore his text-book to pieces. A little later, when he was composed, he realised his predicament. He had not the necessary money to purchase a new book. Then he went to his brother student Savardekar and narrated to him his predicament and wanted a loan of his text-book for only a couple of days, as he could not tax his brother who was already bearing the burden of educating him out of his meagre earnings for the purchase of a new book and therefore begged him to loan the book. Savardekar lent it. It appears Gokhale got by heart the entire book in a couple of days and had no need to read it afterwards.

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Refused promotion

One day when he was still at school an exercise in Algebra was given to him along with his class fellows. Next day nobody brought the correct solution except Gokhale, and the teacher well pleased with him asked him to sit at the top of the class. But Gokhale would not move but was in tears. He explained that the solution was not his, but that he had the assistance of some senior student and felt therefore some scruple in taking the promotion that he has been awarded.

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Age was no bar

Though Gokhale had passed the selection examination for the Matriculation Examination, there was a last minute hitch in sending him up for the examination as he was underaged. The headmaster therefore did not include his name in the list and called Gokhale and explained the situation to Gokhale. Gokhale was completely upset and went home dejected. At nightfall he told his aunt that he was going to headmaster's house and he may come late or spend the night in his house, as many boys in those days did. He went to the headmaster's house and pleaded with the headmaster to send him up for the examination as his brother had not the means to educate him for another year and if he did not send him he said he and his family will be in great distress. Just then the headmaster's wife having overheard the conversation saw the young and childlike face of Gokhale and asked her husband whether he did not feel like helping such a young, attractive, innocent-looking, clever boy. "You have selected the other boy in the fourth house who is well known as a half-wit ". The headmaster said " You need not recommend Gokhale to me. He is in every way one of our good boys, but he is under-aged. The rule says I cannot send an underaged boy.

I am helpless. The other boy whom you referred has just got the minimum marks and not underaged. That is why he is sent". Then the headmaster addressed Gopal, and said "Gopal you can go home, I shall speak to your uncle. Don't worry. You can certainly appear next year". Then he bolted the door and went to sleep. At about 4 a.m. the headmaster's wife opened the door and came out to clean the door-steps. To her surprise she found Gokhale still standing near the door. Immediately she recognized him and shouted to her husband and said "Gopal had been standing in the open all night because you have not sent him. Please come and satisfy the boy and give him an assurance that you would send him for the Matriculation Examination so that he may go home. He is a nice boy. You write to the department that though he is underaged you are sending him for the examination as he can do very well". The headmaster said, "it may require a physical fitness certificate". Interrupting the headmaster, Gopal said, "Sir I have done well in all games in the school and outside and I am better in health than most of the boys who have been sent, as the school records will show". The headmaster did not till then remember this aspect of Gokhale's life and seeing the indisputable claim of Gokhale to be sent purely on his academic performance and the powerful advocate Gokhale had in his wife, assured him that he would send his name for the Matriculation Examination after looking once again into the records. That year Gokhale was sent.

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Proud and abstemious

Then Gopal was studying at Kolhapur, the inmates of his eating house were divided into two groups, the members of the first being allowed curds and pickles and chutneys for which they were charged an extra eight annas per month and the second group being satisfied with food sans curds, sans pickles and therefore paying Rs. 4 in all each month. Once young Gopal Rao quite inadvertently asked for curds, but he was rebuked by the cook that as he, who was paying only Rs. 4 should have the impudence to ask for curds. At once the proud spirit of Gopal Rao was roused so that he got himself enrolled in the first group. This step taken on the spur of the moment soon taxed his mind to find the ways and means to meet this additional half-a-rupee. He could not write to his brother for this extra sum nor earn it by himself, but he soon hit on something. Members of the first group absenting themselves from any meal were not to be charged for it and Gokhale managed to go without food on some occasions in order to make good the eight annas.

Didn't Study at Night

When both the brothers were studying at Kagal, Gopal Rao always did well and Govinda Rao not so well. So once the teacher told the uncle of the two brothers that Govinda Rao should pay more attention to his studies. At night when Gopal Rao was studying Govinda Rao came up to him and told him that he could not keep late hours like him and study and therefore Gopal Rao must not also study at night. So saying he put out the light and asked Gopal also to go to sleep. Gopal Rao, like a meek and affectionate brother obeyed his brother and abstained from reading at night when Govinda Rao was in the house. Yet he did well.

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More than a match

It was on board the Crown Prince, some years ago that I found myseif in the master's company together with the common friend Mr. Kallenbach. He was accepted as a worthy companion by Gokhale who used to play with him quoit. Mr. Gokhale had just then during his voyage from Cape Town to England picked up that game and he very nearly gave Mr. Kallenbach a beating. I fancy that was a drawn game between them and let me add Mr. Kallenbach so far as I am aware was one of the cleverest players of quoit in South Africa. Just after we had our meals, Gokhale was talking to me with reference to the results of the game.

HIS INFINITE CAPACITY

One of the remarkable characteristics of Mr. Gokhale was the degree to which he was able to combine enthusiasm for reform with a patient industry not too often found in close association with first quality. But he never allowed his idealism and his infinite capacity for taking pains to interfere with the work he set before him. The result was that, whether one agreed or disagreed with him, he gave a sense of practicalness in his dealings which seemed to sweep away half the difficulties at the outset.

—Rt. Hon. Mr. E. S. MONTAGU.

He thought that I never indulged in such sports and that I was against them. He expostulated with me in kind words and said " Do you know why I want to enter into such competitions with Europeans ? I certainly want to do at least as much as they can do for the sake of our country. It is said rightly or wrongly that we are inferior people in many matters and so far as I can do it", and this he said in al humility. " I certainly want to show that we are at least their equals if not their superiors "—*Gandhiji.*

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Once a well-to-do friend of Gokhale invited him to a theatrical performance and Gokhale taking it as an invitation agreed. Next day the friend who could very well have borne the expense presented Gokhale with a bill of two annas as Gopal Rao's share for the ticket. Though taken aback, he paid it and made up the deficit by saving on oil through reading by the light of street lamps.

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Rules of the game

The brothers, Govinda Rao and Gopal Rao were playing a village game of running after and catching the opponents with a quadrangular space bounded by some lines within which alone they had the liberty of moving about. It so happened that the two brothers were put on the opposite sides and chance brought Govinda Rao, the elder to be chased by the younger Gopal Rao, the former trying to score a run. When the elder brother found it was no easy work for him to outstrip the younger, he began to use his authority as senior to escape, whereupon Gopal Rao firmly but very meekly answered, " Rather ask me not to take any part in this game, for that will be far smaller sacrifice for me than what you ask, for as long as I belong to a party, I must, to the utmost of my powers, uphold its nterests, irrespective of any other consideration."—*Shahani.*

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A Noble Soul

Gokhale was a noble soul fired by a patriotism all consuming. A born leader of man, he never aspired to anything but to be humblest servant of the motherland.

—MOTILAL

Big sacrifice

He took to games as earnestly as to business. When at play he was intensely earnest so much so that while playing cards (or billiards or tennis) if the other play ers did not take the game as seriously as he did he would get irritated. Once a friend played quite seriously as his partner just to humour him and his joy was unbounded like that of a playful child and said, " Oh, I thank you so much, you played well. The other people purposely tease me, because they know I am annoyed at their slipshod play. "—*P. K. Telang.*

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"When Gokhale was appointed a Member of the Public Services Commission he was to get £ 1,000 a year, but it involved the resignation of his seat in the Legislative Council. He refused to do so and made the heavy pecuniary sacrifice and continued to work as a Member of the Legislative Council."—*Sir S. N. Banerji.*

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GENEROUS TO A FAULT

A characteristic incident occurred when Gokhale was leaving Bankipore. He was a member of the Public Services Commission at the time and as such was entitled to first-class railway compartment to himself. He was not well and crowds and uncongenial company upset him. He liked to be left alone by himself and after the strain of the Congress session he was looking forward to a quiet journey by train. He got his compartment but the rest of the train was crowded with delegates returning to Calcutta. After a little while, Bhupendras nath Basu, who later became a member of the India Council came up to Gokhale and casually asked him if he could travel in his compartment. Gokhale was a little taken aback as Basu was an aggressive talker, but naturally he agreed. A few minutes later Basu again came up to Gokhale and asked him if he would mind if a friend of his also travelled in the same compartment. Gokhale again mildy agreed. A little before the train left, Basu mentioned casually that both he and his friend would find it comfortable to sleep in the lower berth so would Gokhale mind occupying an upper berth so that the two lower berths may be taken by them. Poor Gokhale had to climb up and spend a bad night.

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[How Gokhale came forward to protect Tilak, his political opponent, during the stormy Surat Session in 1907 *is narrated by Mr. Nevinson.]*

In front the enormous audience raged like a white sea. Mr. Gokhale leader of the Moderates, stood beside his old extremist-friend and opponent with both arms stretched out to protect him. In another second a wave of men brandishing long sticks rushed over the platform, table, chair, Moderates, and all. But I had time to recognise how that little action revealed the man. "Sweet reasonableness", "Sweetness and light"—these are exactly the qualities that Mr. Gokhale possesses, and with them he has courage, rather a rare combination. Other leaders of the Indian Reform movement have greater rhetorical power, more popular ways and perhaps wider influence with the common people; but I know none who gives such a sense of confidence of clear and definite aims and of a reasonable estimate as to what is possible and what is not.

REJECTED KNIGHTHOOD

I remember in London when he had just an offer made him of knighthood, I happened to go to see him. And he said "What shall I do with it? If I accept this honour, shall I not cease to be Gopal Krishna Gokhale whom my friends love and are familiar with". "Sir Gopal Rao Gokhale" he said, would seem to erect a barrier. So, as you know the nominal knighthood went, because he was too knightly, too chivalrous in his soul to accept the title which he thought would act as a barrier for men many of whom were humble in position, but were dear to his noble heart—*Dr. Besant.*

* * *

No charity please

I happened to be present when the Public Services Commission visited Madras and were invited by the ever-hospitable Natesan to his house. I was talking to Mr. Madge, I.C.S., who was then a Member of the Viceroy's Council on a bill in which he was much interested. At that moment Mr. Gokhale came up to us. Mr. Madge said to Gokhale a little abruptly, "Oh, Mr. Gokhale I was just thinking that the best of you do not come among us? Why do you not join us and work with us?" There was a moment's silence and then Mr. Gokhale drew himself up to his full height and said, "We will never come among you Mr. Madge until you are prepared to treat us as your equals."—*Dr. Besant.*

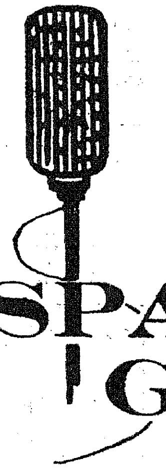
* * *

"I started for England for the third time from Bombay on May 31st, 1912. By a curious coincidence Gokhale happened to be my fellow passenger and I immensely enjoyed and profited by his company. One incident comes vividly to my mind. An English merchant who had business relations in the East was returning and was among the passengers. One morning at the breakfast table the conversation turned upon the amount spent by the Indian Government on education. He in a supercilious tone exclaimed, "What, are we not spending too much on Education?" Gokhale at once flared up and said, "Sir, What do you mean by we. Am I to understand that England raises a sum by subscription and spends it as charity for Education in India". Gokhale was always known to be of imperturbable temper and this was the only occasion I saw him lose control of it. The effect at the breakfast table was almost magical. Everyone kept quiet—***Sir P. C. Ray.***

* * *

Dutiful gateman

Gokhale entered the Deccan Education Society as life member. Ranade was then, as even now, the Father and Founder of all National movements. In 1885 the Deccan Education Society was to enter a new phase of activity. The Bombay Governor was to inaugurate the ceremony. It was a unique function for the residents of Poona. The number of invitees was limited with numbered cards. Mr. Gokhale was asked to receive the guests at the door. The honourable Mr. Ranade (as he then was) could not show his card, and Gokhale would not allow him to enter as the latter had not seen the former before. It created a sort of uneasiness in the hall, and the senior member of the Society intervened and took Ranade in the hall. The ceremony passed then smoothly but it touched the delicate heart of young Gokhale. Six months or so passed and he was, all of a sudden sent for by Mr. Ranade. All quietly Ranade asked Mr. Gokhale to take charge of the Secretaryship of the Sarvajana Sabha of Poona. Mr. Gokhale first eased his heart by expressing his regret for the last mentioned incident. Ranade with a smile said that, however, revealed you to me as the fittest person for the work now being entrusted to you. This, in short, was the beginning of the relations between his great Guru and his disinterested disciple which commenced in 1886 and lasted to the last. *[From* "Gokhale Digest", *Compiled by Sri S. R. Venkataraman, Servants of India Society, Madras.]*



THUS SPAKE GOKHALE

Gokhale's speeches bear the stamp of clear thinking and unassailable logic. Always sober, constructive and dignified, he carried conviction even to those who were opposed to the cause he championed. Some of his utterances have all-time validity. Here are excerpts from the speeches of this great patriot.

The best part of our nature is manifested not in what we enjoy but what we endure. There is a sublimity and moral elevation in deserved suffering which nothing can equal, and which is almost its own reward.

—*In a letter to A. K. Ghosh (A Correspondent) on 15th January* 1898.

* * * *

The Life

The whole life of a people, which is broader and deeper than what is touched by purely political institutions, is enriched even by failures, provided the effort has been all that it should be.

—*Presidential Address, 21st Indian National Congress Session held at Benares in* 1905

* * * *

Life is not like writing on a clean slate. We have to take the words existing on the slate and add other words so as to make complete sentences and produce a harmonious meaning. Secondly, whatever, you may ask for, that is not the same thing as what you will get or will be qualified to get or in practice maintain if you get. Let us, therefore, not go in pursuit of more idle dreams and neglect the opportunities which the present offers to us.

—*Presidential Address, 23rd Session of the Indian National Congress, held at Madras in December* 1908.

* * * *

A great writer has said that castes are eminently useful for the preservation of society, but that they are utterly unsuited for purposes of progress. And this I think is perfectly true. If you want to stand where you were a thousand years ago, the system of castes need not be modified in any material degree. If however, you want to emerge out of the slough in which you have long remained sunk, it will not do for you to

Gifted Parliamentarian

In fact he was the leader of the opposition and in that capacity I had often to suffer from the weight of Mr. Gokhale's blows . . . I have never met a man of any nationality more gifted with Parliamentary capacities. Mr. Gokhale would have obtained a position of distinction in any Parliament in the World, even in the British House of Commons. Widely as we differed, I never failed to recognize either his ability or his high character.

—LORD CURZON

insist on a rigid adherence to caste. Modern civilisation has accepted greater equality for all as its watchword, as against privilege and exclusiveness, which were the root ideas of the old world.

—Address to the Dharwar Social Conference held on 27th April 1903.

* * *

Education

I think that this question of compulsory and free primary education is now in this country the question of questions. The well-being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the humanising influence of education depends upon it. The increased efficiency of individual, the higher general level of intelligence, the stiffening of the moral backbone of large sections of the community, none of these things can come without such education. In fact the whole of our nation is inextricably bound up with it.

—From Gokhale's speech at the Imperial Legislative Council on Free and Compulsory Elementary Education on 18th March 1910.

* * *

Even if the advantages of elementary education be put to no higher than a capacity to read and write, its universal diffusion is a matter of prime importance, for literacy is better than illiteracy any day, and the banishment of a whole people's illiteracy is no mean achievement. But elementary education for the mass of the people means something more than a mere capacity to read and write. It means for them a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It means the greater moral and economic efficiency of the individual. It means a higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally.

— From Gokhale's Imperial Legislative Council speech on 16th March 1911.

* * *

A wide diffusion of female education in all the branches is a factor of the highest value to the true well-being of every nation.

* * *

Attachment to Motherland

Education, enlightened freedom and an honoured position in the society, these—and not enforced seclusion and ignorance—are the rightful inheritance of Indian women.

—From a paper read at the Educational Congress in London in 1897.

* * *

The claims of public life are every day receiving wider recognition, and attachment to the land of our birth is growing into a strong and deeply cherished passsion of the heart.

* * *

Our essential condition of success in this work is that a sufficient number of our country men must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualised. Love of the country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side. A fervent patriotism which rejoices at every opportunity of sacrifice for the motherland, a dauntless heart which refuses to be turned back from its object by difficulty or danger, a deep faith in the purpose of providence which nothing can shake equipped with these, the worker must start on his mission and reverently seek the joy which comes of spending oneself in the service of one's country.

—*From the Servants of India Society Constitution.*

* * *

Public Life

It is our duty to recognise the demands which the present makes on us, by putting more life and energy into our work. Our public life is really feeble and ineffective because it is so faint-hearted and so soulless. Very few of us have really faith in the work we are doing. When men take up work in a mechanical spirit, without believing in it, you should not be surprised if no great results are achieved.

—*From Gokhale's public address at Madras on 25th July* 1904.

* * *

Public duties, undertaken at the bidding of no man cannot be laid down at the desire of any one. . . One is always glad of the approbation of the public of what one has done . . . But it is not the highest purpose of existence, nor nearly the highest. If it comes—to use the words of Herbert Spencer—well, if not, well also, though not so well.

—*In a letter to the press* (*'Times of India', dated 2nd August* 1897).

* * *

Students and politics

Public life in this country has few rewards and many trials and discouragements. The prospect of work to be done is vast, and no one can say what it is on the other side—how all this work may end. But one thing is clear. Those who feel in the matter as I do must devote themselves to the work in a spirit of hope and faith and seek only the satisfaction which comes of all disinterested exertions.

—*From farewell address to Fergusson College on 19th September* 1902.

* * *

There must be more discipline in our public life. At the same time there must be a greater realisation on the part of the leaders of the responsibilities that devolve upon them. The day has gone by when politics could afford to be amateurish in this land. It has been amateurish in the past; but the struggle is growing keener and keener and it is necessary that men should take up the duties and responsibilities of public life in the same manner as they choose their profession and devote their energies to it.

—*From a public address at Madras on 25th July* 1904.

* * *

One of the most anxious, as it is one of the most important, problems confronting us to-day is how to supply the guidance, at once wise and patriotic, to our young men, so that their lives may be directed into channels of high purpose and earnest endeavour in the service of the motherland. To sustain, on the one hand, those pure impulses of youth, and on the other, to instil in the minds a due sense of proportion and of responsibility and a correct realisation of the true needs of the country—this can never to be an easy task, and in the present situation of India, it is beset with extraordinary difficulties. . . .

* * *

Political agitation

It is not the fact of their movement, so much as the direction in which a large proportion of them have been moving that calls for our most earnest attention and our closest inquiry. . . . . Ideas and aspirations, which give a decisive bent to their minds are, therefore, matters of deepest moment to the country, and behoves us all seriously to examine how far they are calculated to prepare them for the responsibilities which must in due course descend to them.

* * *

Political agitation, directed towards the people, seeks to educate and organise public feeling and public opinion in political matters. Directed towards the Government, it seeks to bring the pressure of that feeling or opinion to bear upon authorities for the purpose of securing the changes that are desired. In either case it is a most responsible action, and students with their immature judgments are not qualified to take part in it . . . . The period of four or five years, which young men spend at college, is all too short a time for the work which properly belongs to it, namely, preparation in knowledge and character for the responsibilities of life. Surely, it is not too much to ask our students to exercise a little patience and self-restraint during this period and refrain from action in politics, till after they have completed their studies and taken their place in the public life of the country.

—*From an address delivered at Bombay on 9th October* 1909.

* * *

SHOULD INDIA WAIT?

There is work enough for the most enthusiastic lover of his country. In fact, on every side, whichever way we turn, only one sight meets the eye, that of work to be done and only one cry is heard, that there are but few faithful workers. Shall the need go unsupplied? . . . . . The work is the work of our country. It is also work of humanity. If after all the awakening of which we speak and over which we justly rejoice, these fields do not yield their harvest for want of workers India must wait for another generation before she receives faithful service from her children.

—From an address delivered at Bombay on 9th October 1909.

Strength of the Nation

And here at the outset let me say that I recognize no limits to my aspiration for our motherland. I want our people to be in their own country what other people are in theirs. I want our men and women, without distinction of caste or creed, to have opportunities to grow to the full heights of their stature, unhampered by cramping and unnatural restrictions. I want India to take her proper place among the great nations of the world, politically, industrially, in religion, in literature, in science and in arts. I want all this and feel at the same time that the whole of this aspiration can, in its essence and its reality, be realised . . .

* * *

We cannot allow ourselves to be split up into small sections fighting with one another for the sake of petty differences. After all, there is a destiny which is really shaping our ends, and we are all engaged in merely rough-hewing them. Whoever promotes union in the country, whoever preaches swadeshi, whoever inculcates lessons of self-sacrifice, whoever builds up in any shape or form the strength of the nation politically, socially, industrially, morally—he is a fellow worker, a brother.

—Public address at Allahabad on 4th February 1907.

* * *

Nation-building is nowhere an easy task. In India it is beset with difficulties which are truly formidable and which will take to the uttermost all our resources, and all our devotion. Let us not forget that we are at a stage of the country's progress when our achievements are bound to be small, and our disappointments frequent and trying. That is the place which it has pleased Providence to assign to us in this struggle, and our responsibility is ended when we have done the work which belongs to that place. It will, no doubt, be given to our future generations to serve India by their successes. We, of the present generation, must be content to serve her mainly by our failures. For hard though it be, out of those failures the strength will come which in the end will accomplish great tasks.

—Public address at Allahabad on 4th February 1907.

* * *

When India grows

The results achieved so far are undoubtedly most gratifying, but they only mean that the jungle has been cleared and the foundations laid. The work of rearing the superstructure has yet to be taken in hand and the situation demands on the part of workers devotion and sacrifices proportionate to the magnitude of the task.

—From the Servants of India Society Constitution.

* * *

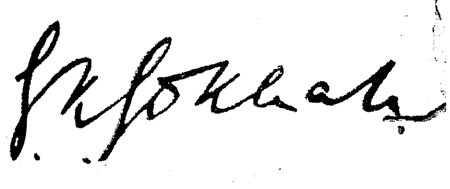
Work, work, is the cry all round. If you devote the best in you in a selfless spirit your duty will have been done.

* * *

When the men and women of India begin to grow to the full height of their stature and proclaim to the world the mission that shall be theirs, a great stream of moral and spiritual energy, long lost to view, will have returned to its channel, and East and West, white and dark and yellow and brown—all have cause alike to rejoice.

. . . I believe whole heartedly in a great destiny for the people of my land.

—From the paper read at the Universal Races Congress held in July 1911 *at London.*



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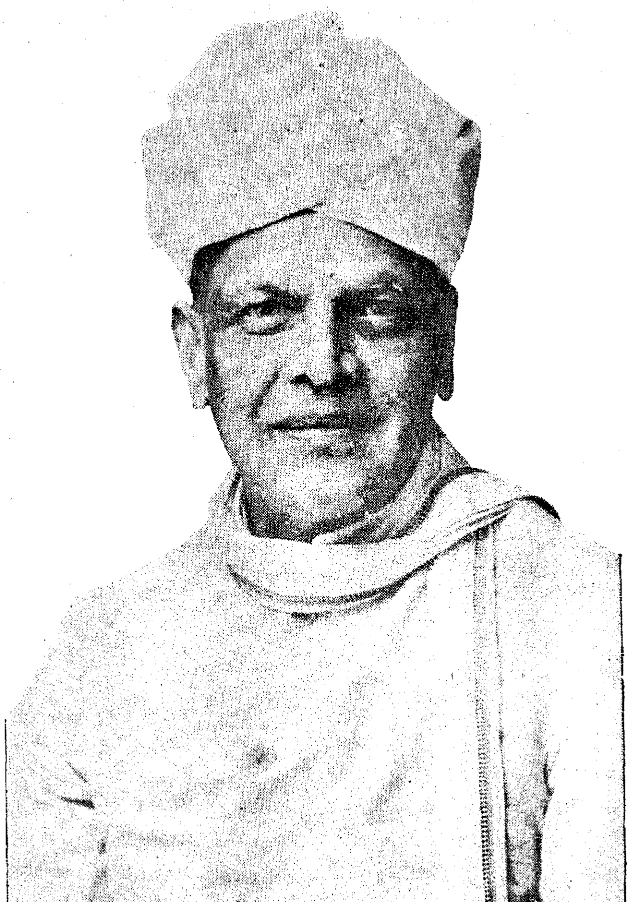
LESSONS FROM Gokhale's life

The following passage is from the third of the three extension lectures delivered by the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri at the Mysore University on the life and work of his Master Gopal Krishna Gokhale.



There is in this world a great amount of miscarriage of human endeavour, there is considerable wreckage of happiness and there is, probably, also a great deal of unnecessary misery, just because of one circumstance in the arrangement that we see around us in the world. Of one thousand people that you study, occupying various positions and discharging various duties to the community, you will probably find 999 whom you can only describe as round men in square holes. No doubt in colleges and other places we teach men what is called the choice of a career. But how many people there are to whom a career is open for choice? Most of us now-a-days never find a career at all! And those that find it have no choice in the matter, but take just what they can get. It is no wonder, therefore, that the world is full, as I said, of miscarriage of effort, of misdirection of endeavour, misapplication of energy and therefore a large amount of positive harm to the community where men discharge tasks for which they are not fitted.

The career Gokhale chose

This matter, therefore, is of the most significant value in life; to find fit men for fit places. I wonder whether there is really one in a thousand who can be described as exactly fitted for the work that he performs in life. I remember reading in the famous drama of Kalidasa, a sloka where he says that in the world of matrimony misfits are the rule; a couple who seem made for each other very, very rare. And so, seeing that Dushyanta and Sakuntala have been brought together as bride and groom, the poet exclaims, "ah, how since Fate has yoked together two people each of whom is worthy of the other in the matter of high quality, for a long time from now, the world will not censure Fate; he will escape blame". Happy in the same way is the contemplation of a career which has found a worthy person. It seems to me that somehow Gokhale was fitted in every way for the career that he chose; and yet nobody who studied him from boyhood upwards would have predicted for many years that he would play a great part in Indian affairs. For, as I told you, he started with many disadvantages. For one thing, his station in life was very modest. His intellectual endowments were by no means what you would call brilliant. Nevertheless, what came to him were great opportunities.

PRODIGIOUS MEMORY

Gopal Krishna Gokhale gained a reputation in his college days for his prodigious memory. Srinivasa Sastri says, "Often he would lend a text book to a mate and ask him to hold it while he went on reciting by heart. There used to be a bet, it would appear, that he would pay down an anna for every slip he made. Nobody made a fortune out of his mistakes".

Now, here is another matter for contemplation. Opportunities come to us all. Only some of us never see them . Others, having seen them, do not profit by them. Opportunities of some kind each one of us has. In the case of Gokhale, there is no doubt his opportunities were superlative, for he came as a graduate to the teaching profession in which men like Tilak, Agarkar and Apte had already taken their places and were doing work which was winning admiration and gratitude from all quarters. Not only that, but soon afterwards, he fell under the influence of Ranade and Joshi and still later of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. These were great opportunities. Not every one of us can say that such things would happen to us. But the great merit of Gokhale was that he saw the value of these opportunities at every stage. He had great ambitions, but he knew also that Providence had placed in his hands facilities for realising them. He allowed Ranade and Joshi and Mehta to mould his outlook upon life and to shape his character, to inculcate high ideals and principles besides teaching him the successive stages of the work that he was to do.

Conscientiously sought advice

But can we say that we have not got similar opportunities, although they may not be really of that order of eminence ? We all have something ; we all have some supporters, whom we can see ; we all have wise peoples to whom we may go ; we all have teachers, relative and others who have seen more of life and are in a position to advise and guide us. Do we go to them actually ? On the contrary, is it not our one great complaint as teachers that we are continually having to give advice and guidance when we know that it will not be heeded at all ? That is a sad thought. Advice has been described as that which is sought but never followed.

In the case of Gokhale, what I want to tell you is, he conscientiously sought advice of those who could give it, he placed himself conscientiously under their guidance ; and when their influence was removed by the hand of Time, he could instruct himself, he could order his daily work, he could carry forward the work that they had left for him to accomplish in his own good time. That is a great lesson to be drawn from his life, that we should seek opportunities, realise them when they are beside us with a determination and a will to make the best use of them. And then having perfected himself, having armed himself with the necessary knowledge, was he content ? He laid out a programme for himself at the age of 32, after he had tasted the first drop of bitter in his life. He sat down and thought and thought and then made a big programme for himself which was extraordinarily comprehensive. He wanted to encompass all knowledge, practice Yoga, become a member here and there, all for the sake of serving the country. Now that is a programme, which, to borrow a word from gastronomy, one would call gargantuan. Although he did not accomplish the whole of it, you may be sure that the endeavours that he made honestly to fulfil the programme took him forward a great many steps in efficiency, and in the end he had achieved at 49, when he died, a great deal more than what others when they are seventy can claim to their credit. That, it seems to me, is the great value of Gokhale's life.

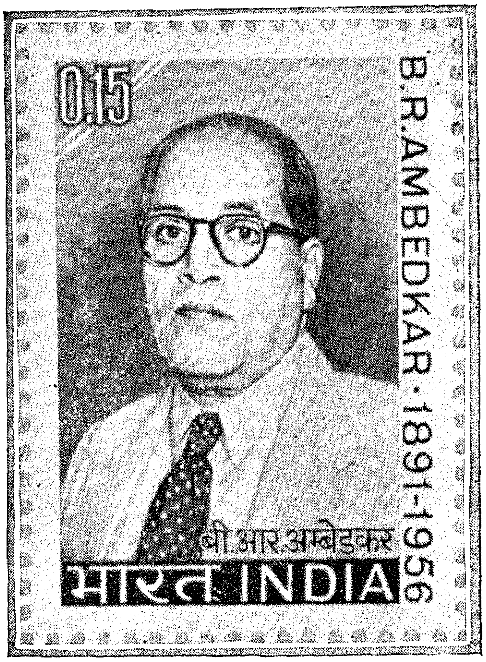
Always aim high,

You have all to aim high in order that you may reach a certain degree of eminence. Because you cannot hope to obtain full grasp of your ideals, you must not cease to be susceptible to ideals ; the contemplation of these high ideals puts you in the proper frame of mind to put forth the maximum effort of which you are capable ; and then, your achievements, although they may still fall short of the ideals, would be vastly greater than, those that could have been yours if you had aimed low.

There is a remarkable passage in John Stuart Mill, where he says of a young student that nothing prepares him for tackling big problems so much as the attempt to solve a problem somewhat more difficult than he can manage. If the problem is within his reach, well within his reach, then it is a matter of comparative case to him. He does not put foth the full powers of his intellect. The task that he undertakes must be a little in excess of his power in order that his best qualities may be evoked. That is the final observation that I wish to make ; that Gokhale never fell below his own standard. He always aimed high and he was never satisfied until he had done the best, the very best that was open to him.

A special 15-paise commemorative stamp which the Post and Telegraphs Department issued on April 5, 1966, to honour the Tamil poet Kambar, who wrote the epic 'Ramayana' in Tamil was released by Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam, Chief Minister on 5th April 1966 in the City.

To honour the memory of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar a 15-paise commemorative stamp was issued by the Post and Telegraphs Department on his 75th Birthday, the 14th April 1966.



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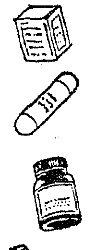

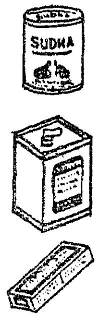

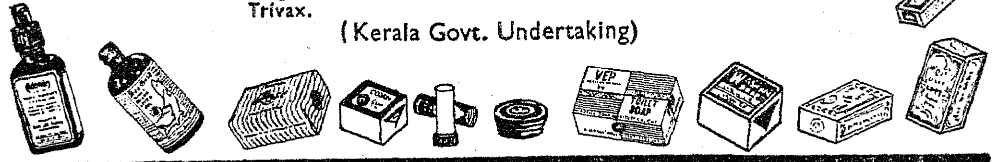

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